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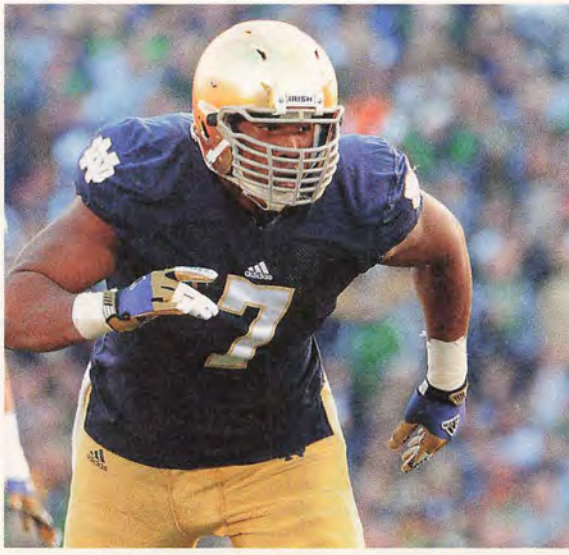

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Letter from the Publisher

Can anybody beat Alabama? That seems to be the biggest question as we embark on the 2013 college football season. Bama has won three of the last four titles and tries to become the first team ever in the poll era to win three in a row.

Dennis Dodd takes an in-depth look at the Crimson Tide Dynasty beginning on page 16. *Lindy's* picks, beginning on page 6, will tell you that we like the Tide's chances of a three-peat.

Which are the up and coming programs that could challenge Bama in the future, if not this year? Dodd takes a peak into Jim Mora's quick turnaround at UCLA and other rising programs beginning on page 22.

Lindy's is sad to report we did not publish an ACC or Pac-12 issue after 26 years of doing so. It was a tough call, but a necessary one as the economics no longer made sense.

Lindy's still believes strongly in print and will publish over 20 issues this year, including our team previews and specials. The ACC and Pac-12 fans can get outstanding overviews of their conference and teams in *Lindy's* national college preview, which will hit the newsstand in late May and early June.

Have a great season! Your comments are always appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lindy Davis Jr.

Lindy Davis

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NATIONAL PICKS

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1. ALABAMA

Gotta have the players, gotta have the coaching, gotta have the schedule. Yeah, Alabama's got all of that.

In the past five years, it seems as though Nick Saban has been drafting players, rather than recruiting them. The guy has been stocking his roster with, well, pretty much whoever he wants. And the schedule looks as if the Sabanator himself went to the league office and demanded an SEC-lite to go. There's no Georgia, no Florida, no South Carolina in the regular season. Like last season, that schedule certainly helps.

Not that we doubt the Tide's ability to handle something tougher, but the easy cross-over conference schedule basically shortens Bama's regular season to a small handful of games, notably vs. Virginia Tech in Atlanta in the opener, at Texas A&M on Sept. 14 and vs. LSU on Nov. 9.

THE GOOD NEWS: Based on Saban's whims, Alabama can hit the "rocket boost" button on offense, freeing up senior quarterback AJ McCarron, running back T.J. Yeldon, receiver Amari Cooper and plenty of their fast friends to run Manziel-like circles around opposing defenses. The talent is there to win shootouts ... yet, as always, it remains well-suited for Saban to sledgehammer his way to victory.

THE BAD NEWS: We don't want to downplay the loss of three starting offensive linemen and three regulars in the rotation on the defensive line. That's significant, although not a fatal blow considering the replacements on hand. Winning the national title requires some luck and good bounces along the way; has Bama used up its share?

OUR CALL: Alabama wins its fourth national title in five seasons, and Steven Spielberg hires Kevin Spacey to play the coach in the movie. This run of success is growing epic, so enjoy the ride. We're going to need a lot more popcorn.

2. Ohio State

This time it counts

There are signs that Ohio State is on a roll. No, real signs all over the Wexner football complex, glorifying the Bucks' undefeated season that ended with a regular-season win over Michigan. OK, fine. Urban Meyer likes to honor it as a "championship" season, but this time it counts, with no bowl ban to muddy up the historical significance. Meyer recruited a top-two class and takes the nation's longest winning streak (12 games) into 2013.

THE GOOD NEWS: Braxton Miller could win the Heisman. There won't be much push back from an unsteady Big Ten. The Buckeyes seemed to come up with positive answers in the spring about a developing receiver corps and a reloading defensive line.

THE BAD NEWS: Miller needs to round out his game. Coaches would prefer a higher completion percentage and fewer first-read scrambles. Meyer also keeps talking about needing more leadership. Departed DE John Simon provided a lot of it. Nineteen current players spent part of the spring in a leadership class to build some of that.

OUR CALL: The Bucks will play in a BCS bowl that was denied them last season. What Pasadena bowl that will be — Jan. 1 as a Big Ten champion or Jan. 6 for the BCS title — depends on Miller and his leadership.

3. Stanford

Comfortable in the high-rent district

College football has to rub its eyes. Is that Stanford? What is the Cardinal still doing here? Stanford has mostly defied expectations in the past three seasons, steamrolling to a stunning 35 victories and three BCS bowls, and now it has earned its staying power and its preseason due. Stanford has its own un-Pac-12-like way of doing things, with its power sets and SEC-like defensive front, and it will be kicking even harder this season to knock down that door to the title game.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Cardinal has a new star quarterback, Kevin Hogan, who started five games, all against ranked teams, to end last season ... and won 'em all. Stanford has four all-star candidates in the front seven, with talented safety Ed Reynolds roaming behind them.

THE BAD NEWS: Those bread-and-butter plays to the tight end won't come as easily, with Zach Ertz and Levine Toilolo off early to the NFL. Stanford tends to play close games — an amazing 10 last season decided by a TD or less. David Shaw's team went 8-2 in such contests, a hard rate to sustain.

OUR CALL: It's either Stanford or Oregon for the Pac-12 title. Take your pick. The Cardinal won the matchup last season and plays host to this year's meeting. And it doesn't have a new coach. Slight edge to the Card.

4. Oregon

Talent remains, but off-field noise is deafening

Chip Kelly, finally, inevitably, took flight and it remains to be seen if this is a Pete Carroll-esque situation, with the coach out-running NCAA sanctions. That's the off-field noise for the Ducks, who quickly and correctly took care of matters on the sideline by promoting offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich, who will now be charged with winning each and every day. If Stanford can make a seamless coaching transition from Jim Harbaugh to David Shaw, why not Oregon?

THE GOOD NEWS: Sophomore Marcus Mariota is fabulous, the best combination passer/runner of Oregon's read-option era. The offense is further built to thrill with De'Anthony Thomas, Byron Marshall and superstar recruit Thomas Tyner in the backfield. Ifo Ekpre-Olomu is the best cornerback in the Pac-12.

THE BAD NEWS: Thomas isn't built to withstand punishment, so it will be interesting to see how many more touches he actually gets. Standout LBs Kiko Alonso and Michael Clay are gone, and the first-round skills of end Dion Jordan will be hard to replace.

OUR CALL: If the Ducks sidestep the long arm of the NCAA's law, then everything is going to be fine, now and for a long time. For 2013, it's all about peaking for the game at Stanford, which some smart folks put on a Thursday night, Nov. 7.

5. Texas A&M

Aggies just arrived, and they aim to stay

He won't, will he? Johnny Football, repeat as Heisman winner, that is. History would suggest no, but everything about Aggie football seems to be unprecedented lately. A&M assimilated into the SEC, winning 11, finishing in the top five, pulling off the biggest pair of upsets of 2012 — winning at Alabama and winning the Heisman. "We just got here," coach Kevin Sumlin said, trying to douse the expectations. No use. Let the expectations rage.

THE GOOD NEWS: Manziel is a force of nature. The most charismatic — and controversial — college football player since Tim Tebow will continue to lead the Aggies. Depending on his NFL prospects, he may have one year to do it.

THE BAD NEWS: SEC coordinators have an offseason to figure out Manziel. Because of that, figure that the quarterback isn't going to lead the team in rushing again. Beyond that, lasting success in the SEC is going to depend on defense, and Sumlin has to replace the top three leaders in tackles for loss, including Damontre Moore.

OUR CALL: The season rests on a Week 3 game in College Station against Alabama. The Tide wants revenge. The Aggies want to prove last season was no fluke. The game is so early and both teams so powerful that the loser could still play for the national championship.

6. Georgia

Could be Wunderdawgs with Murray back at controls

Georgia opened up the offense in Aaron Murray's junior season, resulting in career highs for touchdowns, passing yards and completion percentage. But while the Dawgs rolled most of the competition, it was the defense that forced six Florida turnovers in the victory that eventually broke the SEC East tie and sent the Bulldogs to Atlanta. D-coordinator Todd Grantham must quickly replace several key pieces, with no margin for error in the pursuit of an SEC title.

THE GOOD NEWS: You would get arguments from a couple of notable SEC West schools, but this is arguably the best offensive backfield (Aaron Murray, Todd Gurley, Keith Marshall) in the league. And it's paired with five returning starters on the offensive line, so what's not to like?

THE BAD NEWS: Jarvis Jones, Alec Ogletree, Kwame Geathers and five other starters from defense need to be replaced, a task that will test some more of the talent from March Richt's loaded 2012 recruiting class.

OUR CALL: The Bulldogs fell six yards short of an SEC championship (and more?) a year ago. They get South Carolina and LSU at home and play Florida in Jacksonville, giving them a good chance to return to Atlanta for another crack at that title.

7. Clemson

BCS bowl is next up on the agenda

Dabo Swinney likes to talk about "breaking through walls" when discussing the program. Back-to-back 10-plus win seasons for the first time in more than 20 years? Check. New Years' Eve bowl win over an elite SEC opponent? Check. BCS bowl win? TBD. Some of the key pieces from this streak of success are back for another crack at that final goal — ACC Offensive Player of the Year Tajh Boyd, offensive coordinator Chad Morris and receiver Sammy Watkins.

THE GOOD NEWS: Boyd's improvement last season made Clemson's offense even more difficult to defend. Dedicating himself to get in better shape, Boyd was more mobile than ever, running for 514 yards and throwing for 3,896. More big numbers to come.

THE BAD NEWS: While there were some noticeable differences under defensive coordinator Brent Venables in his first year, the Tigers still have plenty of room for improvement. There are depth concerns in the secondary, and young talent has to step up all over the D.

OUR CALL: The Tigers open against Georgia and close with a trip to South Carolina. Good thing Clemson doesn't play in the SEC. The Florida State game is in Death Valley, which is what really matters as the Tigers eye an ACC title and the Orange Bowl.

8. LSU

Unforgiving schedule could depress win total

LSU showed tremendous resiliency a year ago, bouncing back from an ugly loss at Florida to win back-to-back games against South Carolina and Texas A&M. Unfortunately, the Tigers ran out of gas late against Alabama and fell short of claiming a third division title under Les Miles. LSU could have its strongest offense since 2007 (we're putting faith in Zach Mettenberger here), but it comes in a reloading year for that speedy Tigers' D.

THE GOOD NEWS: New offensive coordinator Cam Cameron inherits seven returning starters from a unit that improved throughout the season, thanks in part to the emergence of freshman Jeremy Hill. Hill rushed for 684 yards and 10 TDs in the Tigers' final seven games, giving fans plenty of reason to expect a balanced attack in 2013.

THE BAD NEWS: After two seasons of riding one of the deepest and most dominant defensive units in the country, the Tigers will finally feel the fallout from NFL departures in 2013. Not that LSU is without highly touted prospects, but there is something to prove and little wiggle room on the schedule.

OUR CALL: A schedule that includes trips to Georgia and Alabama and visits from Florida and Texas A&M aren't ideal for a reloading year, but the Tigers will clip a couple of those teams to prove their worth.

9. South Carolina

On a roll, as defense leads the way

South Carolina is in the midst of the most successful run in program history — back-to-back 11-win seasons for the first time ever, back-to-back Top 10 finishes for the first time ever, and 31 wins over the past three seasons. Steve Spurrier's success has changed the expectations in Columbia, which sets up an interesting set of storylines for 2013.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Ol' Ball Coach knows a thing or two about the Heisman Trophy, and he has a candidate in All-American defensive end Jadeveon Clowney. He'll lead an imposing defensive front, while the offense tries to not mess it up with a pair of QBs that can find the win column.

THE BAD NEWS: Defensive coordinator Lorenzo Ward must find replacements for six of the Gamecocks' top eight tacklers. The attention that Clowney demands should give opportunities to other players on the field, but South Carolina still needs new names to capitalize in those moments.

OUR CALL: South Carolina's success will depend on the defense reloading and Connor Shaw and/or Dylan Thompson keeping the offense rolling without Marcus Lattimore and Ace Sanders. Spurrier's recent success with the Gamecocks has not been built with a plethora of All-SEC talent, but Clowney cannot deliver a title on his own.

10. Louisville

Another Strong run at Big East title (and beyond?)

After notching 11 wins and knocking off Florida in the Sugar Bowl, expectations are high. Charlie Strong was named Big East Coach of the Year, while sophomore quarterback Teddy Bridgewater was selected as the league's Offensive Player of the Year. With plenty of key pieces back, Cardinals' fans are expecting one more league title before joining the ACC in 2014.

THE GOOD NEWS: Bridgewater returns along with 15 other starters from 2012. DeVante Parker, Preston Brown, Calvin Pryor and Hakeem Smith are all back after earning all-conference honors, while the much-improved defensive line could round out what might be the best defense since Strong's arrival.

THE BAD NEWS: The Cardinals still need to prove they are ready to handle success. The jubilation surrounding a school-record 9-0 start came to a screeching halt last season after back-to-back losses to Syracuse and UConn. Louisville will be in a spotlight all season, moving through the American Athletic Conference with a target on its back.

OUR CALL: It's all there for the Cardinals' taking. A BCS game is the minimum expectation and a run of the table is possible, but the hunch is Louisville will stumble somewhere, somehow.

11. Oklahoma State

Stillwater's QB depth runs very deep

It says more than a mouthful about Mike Gundy that the Pokes could lose premier offensive coaches like Dana Holgorsen and Todd Monken and still be picked to win the Big 12. Such is the hard-earned status of Gundy and his program, which should pound the scoreboard in 2013 no matter who's under center.

THE GOOD NEWS: In most programs, a three-man quarterback race reveals weakness at the most important position on the field. Then there's OSU, which has Clint Chelf, Wes Lunt and J.W. Walsh — each of whom proved in 2012, beyond a doubt, that he can get the job done. If one of them starts wire-to-wire, or if they collaborate again, it's a good thing. What a luxury.

THE BAD NEWS: There really isn't much of it; the schedule lines up as favorably as could be hoped for, with Oklahoma, TCU, Baylor and Kansas State all due for visits to Stillwater. But Gundy's defense remains middle-of-the-pack in this league, which always invites concern.

OUR CALL: The Pokes took a step back in the turnover game in 2012. Watch that change this season — and be a decisive factor in another post-Bedlam celebration.

12. Florida

Muschamp madness: Great 'D' awaits sufficient 'O'

That the Gators navigated to an 11-2 record last season with an offense that ranked 103rd nationally was a pretty neat trick for defensive-minded head coach Will Muschamp. With a four-win improvement from his debut season, now Muschamp needs to put the whole package together, scare up a few more points, and take down two-time defending champ Georgia in the SEC East. A top-five recruiting class will help.

THE GOOD NEWS: Only two opponents managed more than 20 points last season, and similar results are expected thanks to a defensive line led by Dominique Easley. Second-year QB Jeff Driskel and second-year coordinator Brent Pease should have the offense making second-year strides. The special teams are the best in the SEC.

THE BAD NEWS: This is Florida. And since Florida recruits Florida, the lack of playmakers and depth at receiver is puzzling, and TE Jordan Reed is no longer around to help out. Overall, the special teams unit is the SEC's best, but successfully replacing kicker Caleb Sturgis is a worry.

OUR CALL: Two big SEC games (LSU, South Carolina) are on the road, and the Gators have lost two in a row to Georgia in Jacksonville. The non-con schedule features Miami and Florida State. Just not enough margin of error for a top 10 pick.

13. Florida State

Counting on a RS-freshman to lead them

Years of Signing Day success finally paid off for Jimbo Fisher in 2012, leading the Seminoles to their first ACC title since 2005 and first BCS bowl win since claiming the national championship in 1999. Now, the theme switches to reloading as Florida State looks to replace seven starters on a Top 5 defense, as well as quarterback EJ Manuel.

THE GOOD NEWS: Florida State is loaded at the skill positions on offense, with ACC title game MVP James Wilder Jr. leading a three-man running back rotation, and five of the top six wide receivers returning. Redshirt freshman QB Jameis Winston, the No. 1 dual-threat QB in the Class of 2012, should have the tools he needs to get settled during a cushy September schedule.

THE BAD NEWS: All reports from Tallahassee suggest that Florida State's six new assistant coaches have brought a new "SEC-style" toughness to practices. But there is still no proof that the new attitude will lead to SEC-style winning, particularly with those holes on defense and a raw QB.

OUR CALL: There is plenty — perhaps too much — on Winston's shoulders. While enough talent remains for Florida State to win the ACC and return to the Orange Bowl, Clemson's QB edge knocks the 'Noles to second in the league.

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14. Notre Dame

A return to terra firma

It seems as if it's Everett Golson or bust. Notre Dame's quarterback improved enough to lead the Irish to a BCS title-game berth. He improved enough to drive off Gunner Kiel. Now what do to Irish do to follow up their best season in a quarter century? ND made that championship run while Golson found himself. Now the question is if there is a higher ceiling for the redshirt sophomore. There needs to be.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Irish won't depart from the team approach that made them hard to figure last season. Actually, they don't have a choice. They will run the ball and play defense, which will again be stout with eight returning starters and plenty of strength on the line.

THE BAD NEWS: Unlike last season, the Irish won't surprise anyone and it's doubtful they will benefit from so many fortunate bounces. Six of Notre Dame's 12 wins were by nine points or less. Someone — or many — must replace Manti Teo's 103 total tackles.

OUR CALL: The Irish were sent back to earth (with a hard landing) in the BCS Championship Game. And there they stay. Everyone will want payback. Until further notice, there are a lack of playmakers. Brian Kelly may regret not cashing in his NFL chance after 2012. Call it 9-3.

15. Oklahoma

Sooners are stout, just not a Juggernaut

Bob Stoops is trucking along with double-digit wins — six times in the past seven seasons — but it's fair to question his, and his program's "elite-ness." We're looking at one BCS win in 10 years for Stoops, and that came against no-chance 2010 Connecticut. Anything less than the Big 12 title remains a major letdown in Norman, as it should.

THE GOOD NEWS: Stoops was dissatisfied enough with a 10-3 result in 2012 that he rejiggered his staff, bringing in new coaches for both the offensive and defensive lines. This is a very good sign — Stoops is motivated. He bristles at any suggestion that his program has been disappointing, but the staff changes speak loudly.

THE BAD NEWS: "The Belldozer" is a fun nickname and all, but can Blake Bell throw the ball? No chance he can replace Landry Jones' passing yardage, but is he more than a fad? The Sooners have their first QB battle in a long while, and there may not be a championship-level option.

OUR CALL: This is still Oklahoma — too big to fail against any of the lightweights in the league. But Sooners fans can forget about taking a crack at the final national title of the BCS era.

16. Michigan

Dual-threat Gardner holds the key to next step

If there's a single enduring image of Michigan's 2012 season, it's running back Vincent Smith being highlight-reeled by South Carolina's Jadeveon Clowney in the Outback Bowl — a fitting ending to a long, hard journey that began with a brutal beatdown by Alabama and included five losses in all. Are the Wolverines tough enough to take control of the Big Ten Legends Division? Is Brady Hoke good enough to stand a chance vs. Urban Meyer this year and beyond?

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Devin Gardner is more of a dual threat than Denard Robinson ever was. For one thing, he actually can throw the ball. He'll run a lot more than he did last season, too. That plop you just heard was coordinator Al Borges putting even more on the plate of a very hungry player.

THE BAD NEWS: For the second offseason in a row, Hoke isn't sure he has what he needs on the defensive line. Mobile quarterbacks Braxton Miller (Ohio State), Taylor Martinez (Nebraska) and Everett Golson (Notre Dame) will have their way if the Wolverines can't get into the offensive backfield.

OUR CALL: Michigan State and Nebraska have had their shots in Indy in December. It's Michigan's turn, darn it! Um, yes, that means two losses to Ohio State is distinctly possible.

17. Boise State

Staying out West made every which way of sense

Boise State's decision to stiff-arm the Big East set up an intriguing 2013 in the expanded Mountain West. Last season, Chris Petersen turned what many predicted would be a "rebuilding year" into 11 wins and a Top 25 finish, further padding his 84-8 career record at Boise State.

THE GOOD NEWS: Petersen is still on the sideline, so the Broncos are capable of anything. Quarterback Joe Southwick was inconsistent early on but finished the season with nine touchdowns and no interceptions in Boise State's final four games, all wins.

THE BAD NEWS: The Broncos need to find replacements for six starters on a defense that ranked in the Top 10 nationally in scoring, giving up just 15.8 points per game. Boise State also needs sophomore Jay Ajayi to step up and continue the team's four-year run of 1,000-yard running backs.

OUR CALL: Being a "BCS buster" will require a win at Washington on opening weekend, but this might not be Boise State's year to crash the party. The Broncos' key games in 2013 will be at Fresno State in September and at Utah State in October. Boise State will be bowling again, but another MW title will take some work.

18. Texas

Are they back? All the way back?

Might as well go ahead and admit it. Texas is rebuilding, not reloading. There is a new outlook, a new offense. While the Horns have progressed from the 5-7 bottoming out in 2010 there are several questions surrounding Year 3 of this comeback. Namely, how does a team with 19 returning starters end up with so many of those questions? The transition to a no-huddle spread offense is somewhat radical, and coordinator Manny Diaz has to revamp a defense that was the worst in school history.

THE GOOD NEWS: Mack Brown has a quarterback. Junior David Ash is the guy after much shuffling the past two seasons, perhaps finally gaining the full confidence of the coaching staff. Veteran receivers Mike Davis and Jaxon Shipley will help the transition to the no-huddle.

THE BAD NEWS: RBs Joe Bergeron, Johnathan Gray and Malcolm Brown were recruited for a run-based, physical offense. By definition, the no-huddle spread means less carries for those guys. The keyword now is "touches." How does Brown keep them all happy?

OUR CALL: We'll know which way the Horns are trending by the end of October. Pay particular attention to Oklahoma and TCU in back-to-back games. Texas is still talented, but it's hard to trust that the Horns are fully back.

19. Baylor

Believe It: Briles' Bears are Big 12 title tough

There better not be anyone left out there who believes Baylor's rise from the depths was all about Robert Griffin III. By the time the Bears were blowing out UCLA in the 2012 Holiday Bowl, they clearly were a more complete team than the one that surrounded RG3 during his Heisman campaign. After starting last season 2-5, the Bears finished with eight wins, the nation's No. 2-ranked offense and — yes — a defense that had come on strong.

THE GOOD NEWS: The overall talent level is the best it has been at Baylor in decades. It was tough to lose RG3, but Nick Florence came on as a fifth-year senior and played beautifully. Now it's Bryce Petty's turn, and the 6-3, 235-pound junior draws raves from coach Art Briles and coordinator Philip Montgomery, from Florence as well as current teammates — from everybody. Did we mention the Bears should have the Big 12's best run game? Yep, it's true.

THE BAD NEWS: Tevin Reese is a productive — occasionally electric — wideout with sprinter's speed, but he isn't quite the matchup nightmare Terrance Williams was for Florence or the born-to-be-No. 1 guy Kendall Wright was for RG3.

OUR CALL: From Briles on down, the Bears are thinking Big 12 title. It's a lot to wrap our brains around, but we wouldn't put it past them.

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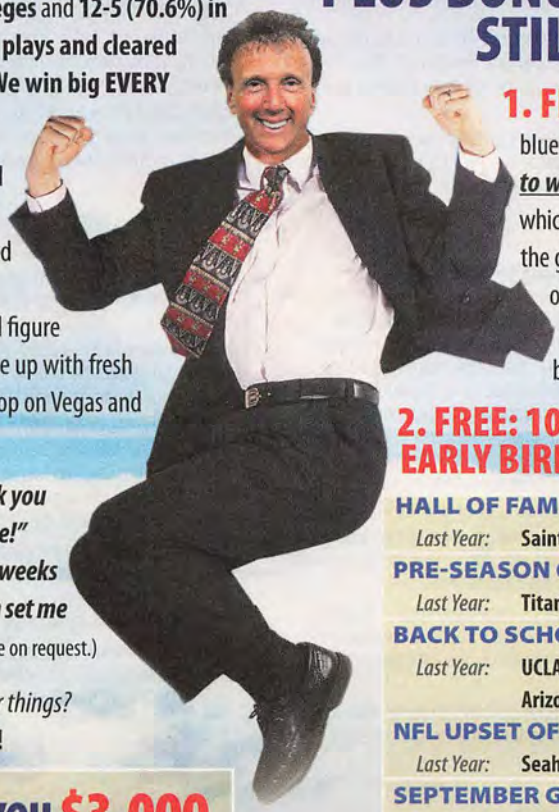

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Last Year:	Titans (+2½) Buccaneers	30-7	WON!
BACK TO SCHOOL PARLAY			
Last Year:	UCLA (+5½) Nebraska	36-30	WON!
	Arizona (+11) Oklahoma State	16-14	WON!
NFL UPSET OF THE MONTH			
Last Year:	Seahawks (+3½) Cowboys	27-7	WON!
SEPTEMBER GOLDEN GAME			
Last Year:	Kansas State (+16½) Oklahoma	24-19	WON!

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20. Michigan State

A little offense will take Sparty a long way

The Spartans failed to leap through the window of opportunity last season, when they had 17 starters returning from an 11-win team ... sadly, not one of those returning starters was a quarterback. Sometimes, that's a big deal, sometimes it's not. It was for MSU, which couldn't complement the running of Le'Veon Bell with a competent passing attack, when just a few points here and there would have greatly improved a 7-6 record.

THE GOOD NEWS: Michigan State finished fourth nationally in total defense and ninth in scoring defense, and a couple of cornerstones return in linebacker Max Bullough and cornerback Darqueze Dennard. QB Andrew Maxwell is improved, and backup Connor Cook is providing a push. Bottom line: MSU will be better at that spot.

THE BAD NEWS: Bell, DE William Gholston and TE Dion Sims left early for the NFL, which prevents the Spartans from being a Top 25 lock. The offensive line unraveled because of injuries last season and will have much to prove this fall.

OUR CALL: Five of the six losses last season were by a combined 14 points, so just a little improvement on offense — especially at QB — will go a long way. A still-wicked defense will take care of the rest in a bounce-back season.

21. Nebraska

Pelini's problem: Too much losing in Lincoln

There is but one L in Pelini, of course, but perhaps there should be four; that's how many games the Huskers have lost in each of Coach Bo's five seasons in Lincoln. Even in 2012, when Nebraska was clutch with six straight wins in October and November, all the good was undone by a humiliating 70-31 loss to Wisconsin in the Big Ten title game and a predictable defeat vs. Georgia in the Citrus Bowl. Real progress in 2013? Sure. Maybe.

THE GOOD NEWS: Taylor Martinez catches a lot of grief for his awkward-looking throwing style, but his steady improvement as a passer is undeniable; he'll have his best group of receivers to work with, too. The running game will be explosive, with Ameer Abdullah getting most of the work.

THE BAD NEWS: All the disappointment on defense in recent seasons indicts Pelini: Is he a D whiz or not? That side of the ball must be rebuilt — again — continuing to assign a certain irrelevance to the term "Blackshirts" and putting Pelini on a pretty hot seat.

OUR CALL: With so much offense, the Huskers can't do worse than four losses. Well, shouldn't. They're the defending Legends Division champs, which counts for something.

22. TCU

Frogs are ferocious, but schedule is scary

There's a healthy preseason buzz about TCU, which might be a little odd considering TCU was 7-6 in 2012, but there's no denying Gary Patterson's exquisite track record in Fort Worth. There are many reasons to forecast dramatic improvement, including the fact much of the rest of the league is breaking in inexperienced/unproven quarterbacks. That's not TCU's problem.

THE GOOD NEWS: Defense matters even in this wide-open league, and TCU's should be dynamite. Cornerback Jason Verrett and safety Sam Carter are the lynchpins in the Big 12's best secondary, and the front seven should bring a lot of push. If the offense does its part, sure, this could be one of the most improved teams in the country.

THE BAD NEWS: Just ask Trevone Boykin. He was pretty heroic at quarterback as a freshman, but he'll be kicked to the curb if Casey Pachall has his act together after several months spent in substance-abuse rehab. The only point here is that the QB situation might be delicate.

OUR CALL: The schedule, starting with a matchup vs. LSU on Aug. 31 in Arlington, Texas, is absurdly difficult. That should prevent a dangerous team from realizing its full potential.

23. UCLA

Another Pac-12 South title would make it a real trend

The Bruins have won the Pac-12 South two consecutive years (the first thanks to USC's NCAA sanctions) and this team is even better. The disappointing end to last season still lingers — UCLA was simply out-classed twice by Stanford, including in the league championship game, and then got run out of the Holiday Bowl by a hot Baylor team — but it's time for the Bruins to turn that into motivational fuel under second-year coach Jim Mora.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sophomore Brett Hundley is the new QB King of Los Angeles, accounting for 292.5 total yards per game last season. Outside linebacker Anthony Barr is rangy and ridiculously athletic, a difference-maker for a defense that still has room to improve.

THE BAD NEWS: The Bruins need to develop a big-time threat at receiver and identify one, two or three guys who can fill the production of departed running back Johnathan Franklin. UCLA lost both starting corners, and starting safety Tevin McDonald was booted in the offseason.

OUR CALL: It looks like you have to spot UCLA three losses — at Nebraska, at Oregon and at Stanford. We're bullish on the rest of the games, though, including the regular-season finale at USC.

24. Miami

Maybe 10th time is a charm for 'Canes in ACC

Al Golden's success on the recruiting trail began to pay off in 2012 as a young Hurricanes team managed to win a share of the division title. ACC Rookie of the Year Duke Johnson helped jump-start the offense with a conference-best 2,060 all-purpose yards, while Stephen Morris owned the full-time starter's role — tossing 21 touchdowns with only seven interceptions.

THE GOOD NEWS: Despite a coordinator change, Miami's offense should continue to hum behind Morris and Johnson. The Hurricanes also have one of the nation's most experienced teams, which is one of the reasons why they are the team to beat in the Coastal Division.

THE BAD NEWS: Miami's offense was called on too many times in 2012 because of a defense that ranked No. 107 nationally and gave up 6.3 yards per play. There is plenty of experience on the roster; they just need to show improvement from a year ago.

OUR CALL: Hard to believe this is the Canes' 10th year in the ACC, and they haven't yet won a conference title or played in the league championship game. They'll get the second part done this season.

25. USC

Another six-loss season just won't cut it

Here's the turning-point season for coach Lane Kiffin. If the rebound from last season's 7-6 pratfall isn't high enough, he'll be gone. If it is, then that likely means the restructuring of his coaching staff worked; he correctly identified the next franchise quarterback; he put UCLA back in its place ... and he can carry on past the still-lingering scholarship reductions. Hmmm. Yeah, finishing 25th in the country probably won't cut it.

THE GOOD NEWS: New defensive coordinator Clancy Pendergast modernized the defense in the spring with hybrid sets better suited to handle the myriad of Pac-12 spreads, a scheme that befuddled Monte Kiffin before his resignation. WR Marqise Lee and RB Silas Redd ease the transition to a new quarterback.

THE BAD NEWS: The quarterback battle continues in the fall, and there will be a shortage of experience either way. The secondary lost three starters and is shaky behind a very good front seven, but Dion Bailey could slide from linebacker to help at safety.

OUR CALL: The schedule is kind and there's a good chance USC could be 4-0 heading into a late September game at Arizona State. The Trojans don't have to be great to get to eight wins and, with their raw talent, the potential is always there for more.

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1. Alabama	SEC	1	6. Georgia	SEC	3	11. Oklahoma State	Big 12	1	16. Michigan	Big Ten	2	21. Nebraska	Big Ten	4
2. Ohio State	Big Ten	1	7. Clemson	ACC	1	12. Florida	SEC	6	17. Boise State	MW	1	22. TCU	Big 12	5
3. Stanford	Pac-12	1	8. LSU	SEC	4	13. Florida State	ACC	2	18. Texas	Big 12	3	23. UCLA	Pac-12	3
4. Oregon	Pac-12	2	9. South Carolina	SEC	5	14. Notre Dame	Ind	1	19. Baylor	Big 12	4	24. Miami	ACC	3
5. Texas A&M	SEC	2	10. Louisville	AAC	1	15. Oklahoma	Big 12	2	20. Michigan State	Big Ten	3	25. USC	Pac-12	4

No.	Team	Conf.	Conf. Rank	
26.	Wisconsin	Big Ten	5	Three straight Rose Bowls is impressive, even without a W in any.
27.	Northern Illinois	MAC	1	With QB Jordan Lynch, certainly good enough to post 12-2 mark again.
28.	Northwestern	Big Ten	6	Bigger year possible, but Cats often sag when expectations highest.
29.	Ole Miss	SEC	7	Rebs have potent attack and will unleash superb recruiting class.
30.	Washington	Pac-12	5	Too much offensive talent to not be a threat in the Pac-12.
31.	Oregon State	Pac-12	6	Mike Riley can win (and be Top 25 worthy) with either of two QBs.
32.	Vanderbilt	SEC	8	Trying to match first nine-win season since 1915.
33.	Fresno State	MW	2	QB Derek Carr back to lead high-scoring Dogs after 9-win season.
34.	Georgia Tech	ACC	4	Young QB, including Vad Lee, look to ignite Paul Johnson's attack.
35.	Rutgers	AAC	2	The stingy defense of 2012 has to reload in last season before Big Ten.
36.	Kansas State	Big 12	6	How much do you believe in Bill Snyder's ability to reload?
37.	Arizona State	Pac-12	7	Todd Graham restored program disclipline in his first season.
38.	Virginia Tech	ACC	5	Feels weird to have Hokies this low; shock the world vs. Bama?
39.	BYU	Ind	2	Cougars going no-huddle; tough sked could cap win total at eight.
40.	Cincinnati	AAC	3	Left behind in old Big East, Bearcats can eventually rule the league.
41.	North Carolina	ACC	6	After 1-year ban, Heels will be back in bowl, contend in Coastal.
42.	San Jose State	MW	3	Spartans can make splash in new league with QB David Fales.
43.	UCF	AAC	4	Potent passing game makes Knights dangerous in new conference.
44.	Iowa State	Big 12	7	Nice stable of backs will enjoy the new Pistol offense in the playbook.
45.	Utah State	MW	4	Aggies ride seven-game win streak into 2013; open at Utah.
46.	Mississippi State	SEC	9	Without major upset, getting to eight wins again looks like the ceiling.
47.	Maryland	ACC	7	Terps have to be better because QB luck can't be any worse than '12.
48.	Penn State	Big Ten	7	Nittany Lions will begin to feel NCAA-mandated scholarship reduction.
49.	Ball State	MAC	2	Key skill players return from team that went 9-4 last season.
50.	East Carolina	C-USA	1	18 starters return for a team that went 7-1 in Conference USA in 2012.
51.	Texas Tech	Big 12	8	Kliff Kingsbury goes from coaching Johnny Manziel to leading Tech.
52.	Arkansas	SEC	10	Hogs hired the right guy, but Petrino-era winning will take time.
53.	Arizona	Pac-12	8	RichRod will go deep into camp looking for post-Matt Scott QB.
54.	Tennessee	SEC	11	Better-coached, but earning a bowl bid will be a challenge.
55.	West Virginia	Big 12	9	No Smith, no Austin, no Bailey (no defense?) ... no big expectations.
56.	Cal	Pac-12	9	Sonny Dykes' twist on passing spread offense: Call it the 'Bear Raid.'
57.	Tulsa	C-USA	2	Strong backfield will propel defending league champs again.
58.	Pitt	ACC	8	Panthers step up in conference class; is QB Tom Savage the answer?
59.	San Diego State	MW	5	Adam Muema ran for 1,458 yards and 16 TDs last season.
60.	Houston	AAC	5	QB David Piland, RB Charles Sims lead Cougars into the American.
61.	Missouri	SEC	12	Not ready for SEC's prime time but offense will make strides.
62.	UConn	AAC	6	It's been a pair of 5-7 seasons for coach Paul Pasqualoni.
63.	Indiana	Big Ten	8	Development and schedule sets up for second bowl in two decades.
64.	NC State	ACC	9	Dave Doeren won big at NIU, brings up-tempo attack to Raleigh.
65.	Auburn	SEC	13	Gus Malzahn returns 'home' as head coach to revive Tigers' offense.
66.	Iowa	Big Ten	9	Offense collapsed during 4-8 season; starting QB TBD.
67.	Washington State	Pac-12	10	The Pirate salvaged something with win in Apple Cup; long way to go.
68.	Navy	Ind	3	Mids looking for 10th bowl appearance in the past 11 seasons.
69.	Utah	Pac-12	11	Utes only 7-11 in conference games in two seasons in the Pac-12.
70.	Minnesota	Big Ten	10	Gophers managed a bowl bid last season with a 2-6 league mark.
71.	Ohio	MAC	3	Very good duo in QB Tyler Tettleton, RB Beau Blankenship.
72.	Louisiana-Monroe	Sun Belt	1	Fourth-year starter Kolton Browning is the Sun Belt's top QB.
73.	SMU	AAC	7	Has won 30 games in past four years; will miss RB Zach Line.
74.	Arkansas State	Sun Belt	2	Aiming for third straight bowl, but QB Ryan Aplin is gone.
75.	Nevada	MW	6	Pack carries on without retired Chris Ault; QB Cody Fajardo a good one.

No.	Team	Conf.	Conf. Rank	
76.	Boston College	ACC	10	First step for new coach Steve Addazio: Just getting back to .500.
77.	Rice	C-USA	3	Veteran squad back from the group that won final five games of 2012.
78.	Louisiana	Sun Belt	3	QB Terrance Broadway leads the charge back to a bowl.
79.	Virginia	ACC	11	Cavs will take a three-man QB battle into fall camp.
80.	Toledo	MAC	4	Nice combo with QB Terrance Owens, RB David Fluellen.
81.	Syracuse	ACC	12	Who will replace QB Ryan Nassib? Check back in the fall.
82.	Duke	ACC	13	Good: First bowl in 18 years. Bad: Still lost last five games of season.
83.	Purdue	Big Ten	11	New coach Darrell Hazell worked magic in two years at Kent State.
84.	Wake Forest	ACC	14	Deacs have nice pass-catch combo in Tanner Price-Michael Campanaro.
85.	Wyoming	MW	8	QB Brett Smith back to build on team's disappointing 4-8 mark.
86.	Air Force	MW	7	Suffered rare sweep in Commander-in-Chief's Trophy in 2012.
87.	Illinois	Big Ten	12	QB Nathan Scheelhaase is still at Illinois? He, Illini need bounce-back.
88.	Kentucky	SEC	14	Mark Stoops has UK fired up for football; that's a start.
89.	Colorado State	MW	9	Offense will click better in coach Jim McElwain's second season.
90.	Middle Tennessee	C-USA	4	Veteran QB Logan Kilgore helps Raiders compete in new league.
91.	Western Kentucky	Sun Belt	4	RB Antonio Andrews adds excitement in Topper's last year in Sun Belt.
92.	Marshall	C-USA	5	Galloping Herd ran more than 90 plays per game last season.
93.	Colorado	Pac-12	12	The return of WR Paul Richardson from injury is rare good news.
94.	Kansas	Big 12	10	Charlie Weis casts his hope with BYU transfer QB Jake Heaps.
95.	South Florida	AAC	8	Coach Willie Taggart will improve team that went 3-9 last season.
96.	New Mexico	MW	10	Second-year coach Bob Davie trying to win with the Pistol offense.
97.	Troy	Sun Belt	5	Corey Robinson, Deon Anthony a dynamic QB duo in Sun Belt.
98.	UTEP	C-USA	6	Sean Kugler, with NFL experience, takes the reins from Mike Price.
99.	Army	Ind	4	Rich Ellerson just 17-32 in 4 years, but Army needs to stick with him.
100.	UAB	C-USA	7	QB Austin Brown was on C-USA All-Freshman team last season.
101.	Southern Miss	C-USA	8	Ex-Okie State OC Todd Monken to the rescue after 0-12 season.
102.	Buffalo	MAC	5	Offense needs to ramp up to improve on four-win record.
103.	Louisiana Tech	C-USA	9	Powered down: Only six starters return for new coach Skip Holtz.
104.	Western Michigan	MAC	6	Cut down on those 21 INTs, and the Broncos are moving up.
105.	Bowling Green	MAC	7	Falcons will have to get it done with a tough defense.
106.	UNLV	MW	11	JC transfers added to veteran squad may not save Bobby Hauck.
107.	Kent State	MAC	8	Has two of MAC's best: RB Dri Archer, DT Roosevelt Nix.
108.	Memphis	AAC	9	Coach Justin Fuente started to see results late last season.
109.	Temple	AAC	10	Will still be tough sledding for offense that struggled to crack 20.
110.	Hawaii	MW	12	Don't usually say this about Hawaii: The offense needs fixing.
111.	North Texas	C-USA	10	No bowl since 2004; won't be easier to do in new C-USA digs.
112.	FAU	C-USA	11	Carl Pelini went 3-9 in his first season as a head coach.
113.	UMass	MAC	9	First year in FBS resulted in a 1-11 record (beating Akron).
114.	Miami (Ohio)	MAC	10	Run game no better than 101st nationally in each of past 5 years.
115.	Akron	MAC	11	Tough rebuilding job for Terry Bowden. It's only Year 2.
116.	Tulane	C-USA	12	Debut of QB Nick Montana, plus easier sked, will improve record.
117.	Central Michigan	MAC	12	Even with No. 1 draft pick Eric Fisher, Chips won just three games.
118.	Idaho	Ind	5	Paul Petrino takes over in advance of 2014 move to Sun Belt.
119.	FIU	C-USA	13	New coach Ron Turner installs pro-style/West Coast offense.
120.	UTSA	C-USA	14	Challenging first month: Okie State, Arizona, Houston.
121.	Texas State	Sun Belt	6	Dennis Franchione's team jumps to new league after 2-4 mark in WAC.
122.	South Alabama	Sun Belt	7	Not enough offense to be upwardly mobile in the Sun Belt.
123.	Eastern Michigan	MAC	13	Shaping up to be last go-round for coach Ron English.
124.	New Mexico State	Ind	6	Doug Martin now in charge after DeWayne Walker went 10-40.
125.	Georgia State	Sun Belt	8	Won only once last season against mostly FCS competition.

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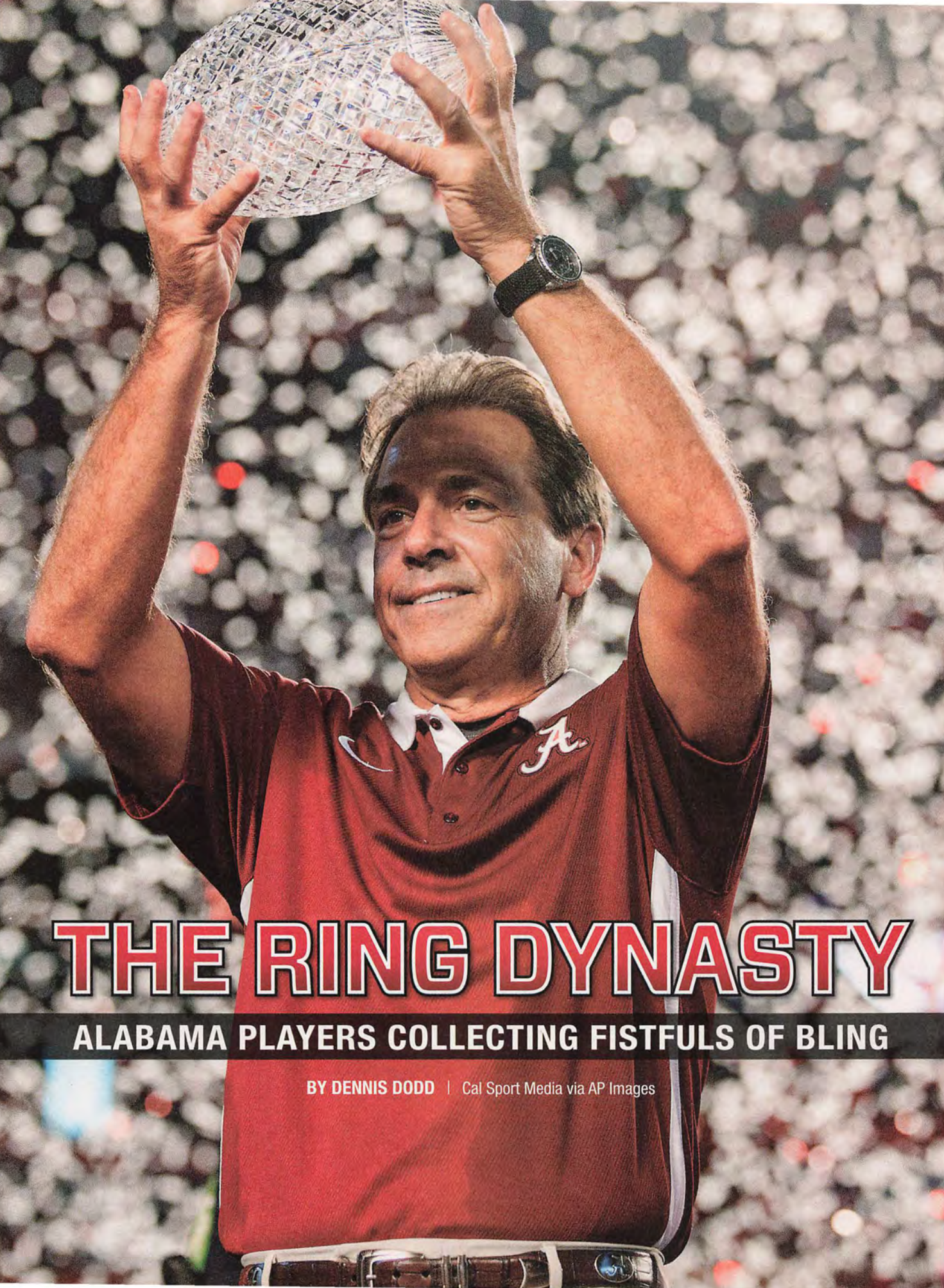

THE RING DYNASTY

ALABAMA PLAYERS COLLECTING FISTFULS OF BLING

BY DENNIS DODD | Cal Sport Media via AP Images

They walked into in the SID's office one-by-one during the offseason, three Alabama champions — linebacker C.J. Mosley, offensive tackle Cyrus Kouandjio and quarterback AJ McCarron. The subject of bling came up, as in exactly how many rings had these champions collected?

"Five rings now," Kouandjio said matter-of-factly.

"I'm on the ring committee," Mosley said proudly. "I helped (design) the rings."

Then the subject fell to McCarron. If Bama succeeds like this magazine and several preseason polls predict, the Tide will win its third consecutive national championship and fourth in five years. All five years, it should be noted, with McCarron on the roster. The fact hasn't escaped the quarterback that his career could have the ultimate bookends — winning national championships in the Rose Bowl.

"That would be my first year and I didn't get to play," McCarron said, recalling his redshirt championship year in 2009. "So getting back would definitely be something special."

So special that if Bama wins again, its quarterback would have more championship rings, 11, than fingers to wear them. Never mind that the program liberally awards jewelry for SEC titles, BCS bowls and national championships, the Tide have earned their rings.

So much so that the three players who passed through the SID's office that day already owned a staggering 18 rings.

"When I get inside the white lines," McCarron said, "I'll be the first to tell you I don't lack confidence."

That goes for the rest of the players in this dynasty, which threatens to become the best of all time. Maybe not the longest — Miami won its five titles during a 19-year span. Maybe not the most impressive streak — Oklahoma had that 47-game winning streak in the 1950s.

But if Bama seals the deal — winning a third consecutive title and fourth in five years — how do you not call this the biggest, baddest, best dynasty in college football history?

The case can certainly be made. Only two other programs had won three championships in four years in the 76-year wire-service era (since 1936).

Notre Dame	1946, 1947, 1949
Nebraska	1994, 1995, 1997
Alabama	2009, 2011, 2012

Alabama did it last season by trouncing Notre Dame in the BCS title game. Or have they renamed it the Crimson Tide Invitational?

Alabama Crimson Tide head coach Nick Saban and running back Eddie Lacy (42) celebrate winning the 2012 SEC Championship game against the Georgia Bulldogs at the Georgia Dome. Alabama won, 32-28.

Photo by Daniel Shirey-USA TODAY Sports

These days, Bama has changed the game more than the game's changing around it. Nebraska scored an incredible 2,257 points in 51 games (44.2 per game) in its four-year stretch. In a different era, Notre Dame posted 12 shutouts in 38 games (1946-49).

Since 2009 when it won the first title in this current run, Bama has averaged 35 points and would have had more if Nick Saban showed less mercy. In that span, the defense has posted seven shutouts. The Tide under Saban have run and stopped the run.

It's a simple old-school plan, but a philosophy that has produced one Heisman winner (Mark Ingram) followed by another Heisman finalist (Trent Richardson). McCarron should be high on the list of 2013 candidates.

After 2011, the defense lost six players to the draft — three first-rounders — and was just as good in 2012. Saban and the boys have caused us to consider a new definition for "dynasty." It's not what have you done for me lately, it's what have you done for me *quickly*.

Seems like we've barely blinked since the Tide beat Virginia Tech on Sept. 5, 2009, to get this party started. Since that date, the program has spent 17 weeks as the AP No. 1. It has won one less SEC title (two) as national championships (three) in that span.

It took a convergence of fortune, tradition, work ethic and skill. Saban made himself available to athletic director Mal Moore in 2007 — two years removed from a successful run at LSU, and two less-than-euphoric years with the Miami Dolphins. Since he arrived, the SEC championship game has become more or less a national semifinal; starting in 2006, the league has won the national championship every season.

All of it is mentioned to hammer home the obvious: The Tide have made this run through (arguably) the most powerful SEC in history. Focus less on the 8-3 record against top 10 teams since 2009 and more on the 24 games played against ranked teams in that span. That's equivalent to two *full seasons* of top 25 challenges.

Saban's third title at Alabama — he has four total — matched the career total of Barry Switzer, Darrell Royal and Woody Hayes (three titles each). Some Alabama players can boast more national championship rings during their playing careers than Bobby Bowden or Joe Paterno (two each) had in their combined 100 years as head coaches.

And the Tide were within a couple of bounces of playing for their fourth title in five years: Remember, No. 1 Alabama lost the 2008 SEC title game to Florida.

Yes, a case can be made.

Dynasty is always a loaded word, sparking debate and suggesting long-term excellence. Many will immediately think of Oklahoma's 47-game winning streak. It took Bud Wilkinson 17 years to win his three titles. Saban now has four championships in his last eight years as a college coach.

A fourth title tied Saban with Notre Dame's Frank Leahy and put him two away from tying

Alabama Crimson Tide waving their back-to-back championship flag during the Discover BCS National Championship.

Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

Alabama fans celebrate after a touchdown during the Discover BCS National Championship game.

Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

Bear Bryant (six titles). You see where this could be headed. College gridiron immortality.

Bama's feat almost needs a translator. Its achievements speak a different language. Its longest winning streak the past four years — 19 games — ended more than two years ago.

How does that compare to Penn State's 31-game undefeated streak from 1967 to '70? It doesn't. Alabama has played those 24 games against ranked teams. In its streak, Penn State played four. That was during its days as an independent when Paterno could arrange a favorable Eastern-based schedule. It took years for his program to overcome the "weak Eastern football" perception with the pollsters.

Meanwhile, Saban favors playing a *ninth* conference game. Bring it on. *More* competition. In the coming playoff era, why not? The selection committee is going to consider schedule strength. Usually, there is no stronger schedule than the SEC's.

'FOOTBALL IS LIKE A TREE'

Consider that Alabama has been able to play for the national championship the past two seasons even after enduring November home losses. It won in 2011 without even winning its division. The pollsters have respected the Alabama brand. Oh, and other contenders have been polite enough to lose at absolutely the wrong time.

But human nature being what it is, how does this dynasty come to work each day, altogether focused?

"Football is an everyday thing," Kouandjio said. "It's like a tree. Each day you either grow or you die. Every day is supposed to be a struggle, a struggle to get better. Some days I go out there and I really don't want to do it, (but) I know I'm going to die out there or get better."

"For me when I was holding that crystal ball (in January), that's what I was thinking about, 'First game,'" Mosley said. "If people look at that picture of me and say, 'He doesn't seem excited,' that's why. Knowing our (next) season started pretty fast."

Saban said the euphoria would last 24 hours. Strength coach Scott Cochran gave himself two weeks.

"This is so much fun," Cochran said immediately after the Notre Dame win. "How can you imagine being somewhere else in the world? There isn't a better place."

Saban, then, isn't going anywhere. Money isn't an issue. He has tried the NFL. He is approaching immortality in Tuscaloosa.

Alabama's biggest obstacle at this point might be the system itself. Next season, it would have to win *two* games in a playoff to capture what could be its fourth consecutive championship.

For now it's two in a row, three out of the last four, and no end in sight.

"Why would he (leave)?" Cochran said on the floor of Sun Life Stadium.

And with that, another rendition of *Sweet Home Alabama* blared through the loudspeakers. In a stadium where Saban made what little NFL head coaching reputation he has — "My credibility wasn't much," he said — the man burnished his everlasting rep as a college coach.

There are 32 NFL teams that, at least secretly, covet Alabama's coach. That's the league where Saban said in January he has no unfinished business. That comment left the door ajar just enough to cover himself in case of, you know, boredom with the whole college thing.

That's about the only thing that would take him away from this nirvana with a drawl, this Million Dollar Band and program. Sure the "Strength Everywhere Conference" has won seven titles in a row. But Alabama has given it some definition, some identity. It has won three of them. LSU (2007) arguably remains the chief challenger. Florida (2006, 2008) is trying to recapture glory. Auburn (2010) is rebuilding.

"In the NFL you can't even predict who's going to the Super Bowl," receiver Amari Cooper said. "In college, it's predictable."

'ALABAMA IS AHEAD OF ALL OF US'

There has to be only one place where unfinished business matters for Saban now. That's in T-town where he could become the greatest coach of all-time, at least in terms of numbers. He is two titles away from tying Bear Bryant's six championships, which would spark one of the greatest debates in sports history.

Who's better?

We'll leave that for future coffee table books. What's more important to some — maybe even Saban — is that he is *perceived* as the greatest coach. The time could come when his name rolls off the tongue and pops up on Wikipedia when the subject is raised.

The man has now played in six AP No. 1 vs. No. 2 games, winning five of them. The consecutive BCS titles are a first. (USC split the 2003 AP title and won the 2004 BCS title.) No program has won three in a row.

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9/5 Cowboys (+4) Giants	24-17	W	9/9 Cards +3 S'hawks	20-16	W
9/6 Pitt +4½ Cincinnati	10-34	L	9/9 Buccs +2½ Panthers	16-10	W

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President Barack Obama, flanked by University of Alabama Crimson Tide head football coach Nick Saban, left, and quarterback AJ McCarron, on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Monday, April 15, 2013, during a ceremony honoring the BCS National Champion University of Alabama Crimson Tide football team.

Photos by AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

Alabama is one season away.

It's OK to say it out loud, in mixed company. Alabama has established a dynasty. Just don't tell the coach.

"I don't think words like 'dynasty' are really words that I'm much interested in," Saban said.

By this time, he is messing with people's minds. The players and coaches all have the sport wired in some continuing, constant way. From the titles, to recruiting, to facilities, to image.

Everything in the game these days seems to be viewed through some sort of Crimson Tide filter.

"Alabama is ahead of all of us," Texas coach Mack Brown said in February, "with the number of personnel they've hired, and that's something that everybody's looking very closely at."

More than one coach has complained about all the "polo shirts" on the Crimson Tide sideline. When it came to bolster his staff, though, Brown went out and hired Patrick Suddes as director of player personnel. Suddes was an associate director of football operations at ... Alabama.

It's possible that coaches aren't so much concerned about recent NCAA recruiting deregulations, it's what Saban could do with them.

And airplane hangars all over the world are jealous. The Tide works out in a new $9 million, 37,000 square-foot weight facility that goes beyond the description "state of the art."

THE NEXT PITCH ... NOTHING ELSE MATTERS

Saban recently visited the Yankees during spring training. Why not? Excellence abides.

"They've got more (championships), than we've got," the coach said.

Saban specifically asked 19-year veteran reliever Mariano Rivera how he stays motivated, maintaining his "standard of excellence."

"You've got to get all that out of your head," Rivera responded, "and focus on the next pitch, the next out, win the game. That's all I think about. Nothing else matters."

Since 2009, Alabama has essentially been the team embodiment of Mariano Rivera. Think of the obstacles. Until Bama's run started in '09, there was some sort of parity in college football.

From 1996 through 2008, 11 teams won national championships. (That includes split titles in 1997 and 2003.) Since the end of the 2008 season, the national championship hasn't left the *state* of Alabama. Last year's repeat came after the Crimson Tide defense lost six starters from the previous season. At tailback, Mark Ingram begat Eddie Lacy, who begat T.J. Yeldon.

"Saban, what he's done, all the sudden, he put this place on the map from the standpoint of setting a culture," said David Morris, McCarron's private quarterback coach. "You expect Alabama to contend every year.

"Growing up, it wasn't that way all the time. It wasn't a machine like it is now."

Miami won four titles in nine years (1983-1991), but with three different coaches.

This century both Miami and USC have put together 34-game winning streaks. They dominated the first half of the century's first decade also winning three championships in four years. Combined.

"Because of today with all the constraints and the level of competition has gone up, there are more good teams out there," Bernie Kish, a historian for the National Football Foundation, said of Alabama. "It's just an unbelievable feat."

Nebraska is the best, most recent comparison to Alabama's current run. But even Tom Osborne didn't operate under the current constraints. It is widely speculated that the Huskers' great coach was given a going-away present by his peers in the coaches' poll in 1997. Having announced his retirement in December of that year, Osborne was able to win title No. 3, splitting it with Michigan.

That was pre-BCS. Fifteen of the 45 all-time 1 vs. 2 games (AP poll) have been played in the BCS era. Of the other 30, Osborne coached in three of them, losing two, during his 25-year head coaching career. In January, Saban coached in his fifth such contest in the last 49 months.

"To go through a season undefeated and be able to play for BCS championship is completely different than it used to be," Kish said.

THE ERA OF THE BEAR

In the Bear Bryant era, Alabama was close to three titles in a row. The 1964 national championship team lost only once — in the bowl game — back when the polls picked the champ before the postseason. The 1965 team lost the opener to Georgia by one point, tied Tennessee, then won the last six in a row to make it two straight.

The 1966 team started No. 1, went 11-0 and finished third. That "Missing Ring" team is largely thought to have paid the price in the polls for segregation in the mid-1960s.

The Tide won again in 1971 and 1973, losing only six games from 1971 to '75. Back-to-back titles in 1978 and 1979 closed out the decade.

Gene Stallings resurrected things briefly in 1992-95, winning the national championship in 1992 and taking the Tide to three SEC title games.

It was a long, tortuous road from there to here for Alabama to be reminded this is what it is supposed to do. Dynasties usually have a longer shelf life, but the definition has changed. This one arrived so suddenly four years ago that it is either about to exhaust its eligibility — or has no end in sight.

Dennis Dodd is a senior college football writer for CBSSports.com.

USC head coach Pete Carroll holds up the Rose Bowl trophy as he celebrates its 28-14 defeat of Michigan after the 90th Rose Bowl, Jan. 1, 2004.

Photo by AP Photo/Chris Carlson

MAKING A HABIT OF IT

Since the Associated Press began selecting national college football champions by ballot of the media in 1936, the NCAA has quasi-officially recognized "major selectors," led by the AP and the coaches poll (currently administered by *USA Today*). In those 77 seasons, 19 schools have won multiple "consensus" national titles.

It should be noted that Alabama claims 15 national championships, including four from before the poll era — 1925, 1926, 1930 and 1934 — and multiple rankings systems at the time agreed. The 1941 title is far more sketchy, as a two-loss Alabama team was picked by the Houlgate System over 8-0 Minnesota, which was the AP champion.

There are varying opinions as to how many "true" national championships some programs have, based on the selector and keeping in mind that it wasn't until the late 1960s, early 1970s that the polls picked a No. 1 after the bowl games.

In any case, here is glance at the 19 programs that have won more than once in the poll era (either AP or Coaches):

SCHOOL	TITLES	LAST
Alabama	10	2012
Notre Dame	8	1988
Oklahoma	7	2000
Southern California	7	2004
Miami	5	2001
Nebraska	5	1997
Ohio State	5	2002
Minnesota	4	1960
Texas	4	2005
Florida	3	2008
LSU	3	2007
Army	2	1945
Auburn	2	2010
Florida State	2	1999
Michigan	2	1997
Michigan State	2	1966
Penn State	2	1986
Pittsburgh	2	1976
Tennessee	2	1998

CHARGING UP THE STAIRS TO STARDOM

MORA AND HUNDLEY LEAD UCLA AMONG PROGRAMS ON THE RISE

BY DENNIS DODD | Photo by AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill

It is a strange place to re-start the Battle of Los Angeles — in a sedate Santa Monica neighborhood near Palisades Park.

But if **Brett Hundley** is going to get to the top of the heap in Los Angeles, The Stairs are a good place to start.

The Santa Monica Stairs start in that upscale neighborhood near the Pacific Ocean, descending into the Santa Monica Canyon. That's the easy part. The views are stunning. The workout population is dedicated, from locals to celebs to personal trainers to tourists.

Now try heading back up, nearly 200 steps worth. There are two sets — wooden, cement. Your choice. Your body. You're all but dead.

"First time I've ever done it," Hundley said, "and probably the hardest (workout) of my life."

Not to diminish the accomplishment, Brett, but you ain't seen nothin' yet.

For the first time in about a dozen years, the city is up for grabs football-wise. USC is down. UCLA beat the Trojans last year for only the second time since 1999. The Bruins are coming off their first nine-win season in seven years, only the second such accomplishment in 15 years.

Outgoing (former) tormentor Matt Barkley seemed to confirm a new Battle of Los Angeles as he left the field during his March pro day.

"It looks pretty rough to tell you the truth," said USC's record-breaking quarterback.

Barkley had accomplished enough as he left for the NFL. As for the team he is leaving behind? They are missing *him*, to start with. The Trojans are also installing a new defense, welcoming four new coaches and fighting off the lingering effects of a dreadful end to 2012.

"It's kind of up in the air to tell you the truth," Barkley added. "We definitely need some leaders to step up. The seniors were a strong group of leaders. It's kind of who's going to be that leader? ... I think maybe the (NCAA) sanctions still might take a toll."

Across town, before noon, Hundley had climbed the steps several times, as well as thrown with his personal quarterback coach, Steve Clarkson. Sipping on a concoction that was two-thirds water and one-third Gatorade, Hundley paused for an on-campus interview before heading for his third workout of the day — this one with

more conventional exercise at the nearby Wooden Center.

"My legs," he said, "feel like Jello."

But they would recover, just like UCLA seems to have done under Jim Mora. It's been a while since the program was this fit, this aggressive, this optimistic.

After Oregon's Marcus Mariota, Hundley figures to be the Pac-12's best quarterback. That's a good place to start in a conference that, at the moment, isn't centered in L.A. The Pac-12 is currently ruled by the scholarly (Stanford) and speedy (Oregon).

UCLA has played in the league's first two conference championship games. In 2011 the Bruins were a stunt-double because USC was on probation. Last year, the game marked the middle of a season-ending three-game losing streak. The resulting vibe in 2013 is equal parts anticipation and trepidation.

"They just needed to be shown the way," Mora said.

It has been such a long, silent, descent into its own canyon of despair for UCLA.

"I don't think we even understand how big our upside is," Hundley said.

Follow the stairs up, down, around town, perhaps into a new era in L.A. football ...

A dozen years ago, Pete Carroll came from the pros and brought USC back largely because his teams were intimidating. They played defense. The Heisman trophies were nice, but mostly those Trojans were successful because they didn't fit the Pac-10's national image of "a little soft."

Recreating Carroll's rapid ascent is Mora's intent. It helps to have the buy-in right away. For whatever reason, Rick Neuheisel's philosophy never caught on in Westwood. A lot of it had to do with an offense that was listless. And the one thing you can't be in L.A. is boring.

Mora says all the right things about Neuheisel. The old coach, now a Pac-12 Network analyst, comes around now and then. His son Jerry is a candidate to back up Hundley. But it's clear that when Mora arrived — a man whose only college experience was a quarter century ago as a grad assistant — some sort of pressure release valve blew within the ranks.

"It was the first day of (2012) spring practice," Mora said. "It was one of the most exhilarating days I've had professionally. I blew the horn to end practice and whole team came up. They were screaming, jumping and just dog-piled me. It was this emotion that just came out. I had just killed them for 2 1/2 hours.

"At that point I said, 'These kids really want to win.'"

Meanwhile, the situation across town begs the question: Will the Trojans keep winning? USC's last losing season was in 2000. But the Trojans' 7-6 mark last year was the first time since 1964 that an AP preseason No. 1 finished unranked.

"Obviously, I didn't coach very well," coach Lane Kiffin said.

Now, the seat under the (former) boy wonder might be the hottest among major-college coaches. It can be argued that losing 30 recruits over three years — the NCAA sanctions still have another year to run — already have had an impact.

The Trojans scaled back hitting in practice last season because of injuries and roster depletions. The defense that gave up 417 points and looked shaky against the spread has been handed over to veteran Clancy Pendergast, one of those new coaches. The entire secondary has to be replaced. The offensive line that returns four starters has to be "fixed," according to Kiffin.

For the first time in forever, the Trojans are looking at a quarterback battle. The line of succession has been mostly uninterrupted since Carson Palmer started the 2000 season. It was 10 years ago that USC had lost one Heisman winner (Palmer) and replaced him with another. Matt Leinart emerged out of a now legendary 2003 spring battle to become the Pac-10 Player of the Year (2003), Heisman winner (2004) and top 10 draft choice (following 2005).

"I don't think that's the huge and only story line right now," Kiffin said of the quarterbacks.

For now, the Battle of Los Angeles ended with defeats by both teams. USC in a horrible, wind-ravaged, depressing 21-7 loss to Georgia Tech in the Sun Bowl. By all rights, Hundley should have been yanked from UCLA's 49-26 Holiday Bowl loss to Baylor.

"I just watched the film of it yesterday," the quarterback admitted in the spring, "It just killed me to watch it."

UCLA head coach Jim Mora.

Photo by AP Photo/Alex Gallardo

That's saying something because today Hundley is a film junkie. When he got to UCLA two years ago from Chandler, Ariz., Hundley didn't know a Cover 3 from a zone blitz. No one ever taught him. Maybe he didn't care to learn. One of Neuheisel's assistants had to sit him down and review.

Now at 6-3, 227 pounds, Hundley is what everyone wants.

"The category now for quarterbacks is that they execute the play that's called," Clarkson said. "They extend the call that's called. And when all hell breaks loose, they can create a play on the fly. He is that modern-day quarterback."

Hundley became the first Bruin quarterback to throw for 300-plus in three straight games. As a freshman, he set the school record for total offense (4,095). But no one was thinking of that last Dec. 27. That night in the Holiday, Baylor went up 35-7. Mora thought about removing his redshirt freshman quarterback at some point during the carnage to spare the kid's body and psyche. It's a good thing he didn't.

"If I had tried to take him out," Mora said, "I probably would have gone out there and had to pull him off the field. We didn't want to give him an easy way out. If you put somebody else in there, you're done."

Hundley said, "I would never do that — to your team, your teammates, your coaches ... it's a respect level. No matter what you're going through, I don't care if you're losing 80-0, you've got to fight through it."

There is no heroic ending here. Baylor won by 23. It could have been 33, or worse. At the conclusion of a promising season, UCLA stunk. Hundley had to throw 50 times and was sacked twice. But he did hang in there, throwing two of his three touchdown passes in the fourth quarter.

So the season was a start, a 9-5 start that everyone has been drilled to think wasn't good enough — even though it was.

"I feel like I could be 100,000 times better than last year," Hundley said.

Before departing for that third workout of the day, the quarterback savored one thing one last time. It's not the Stairs or surviving Baylor. It's USC. In that game he accounted for three touchdowns. In that game, he saw people weeping with joy. In that game, he made everyone in Westwood feel 100,000 times better.

"Do what you need to do in this moment," Hundley recalled Mora telling his first Bruin team, "and you'll remember this for the rest of your lives."

TOP FIVE PROGRAMS ON THE RISE

1. UCLA

Coach Jim Mora burned rubber on the recruiting trail after being hired after the 2011 season. He didn't let up, winning the Pac-12 South and then pulling in the conference's best recruiting class this past February. His popularity and know-how, coinciding with the downturn at USC, have given the Bruins prized momentum in the crosstown rivalry. What a world: UCLA football has a more dynamic coach than USC, and in the spring, USC basketball (Andy Enfield) made a more intriguing hire than UCLA (Steve Alford).

2. TEXAS A&M

It's been a happy divorce from big brother Texas, and the Aggies are only too pleased to play the, "Yeah, we play in the SEC" card. Kevin Sumlin is a monster recruiter who now has further access to the difference-making defensive linemen of the Southeast. It could very well be that Johnny Football has only one more season left in College Station, but the SEC exposure could make A&M the It-Team in Texas, even after Manziel passes completely into folk-lore.

3. LOUISVILLE

There's never been a better time to be a Cardinal. Men's basketball national champs. Women's basketball runner-ups. And a football team that could very well run the table in the regular season. Louisville's timing is impeccable, too, escaping the old, weakened Big East (now the American Athletic Conference) after this season for the comforts, stability and bigger money of the ACC.

4. OLE MISS

Coach Hugh Freeze signed the nation's top defensive end, the top receiver, and the top offensive tackle. If you can win like that in February, you have a chance to win in the fall — and Freeze did enough of that last season in his first year, going a surprising 7-6. The return of 16 starters ramps up the momentum.

5. ARIZONA/ARIZONA STATE

These rivals hadn't had winning records in the same year since 1997, but they managed to do it last season under first-year coaches, the Wildcats with Rich Rodriguez and the Devils behind Todd Graham. Arizona will move into a new $72 million football facility this summer that Rodriguez calls a game-changer for recruiting. ASU is looking at a major re-do of Sun Devil Stadium. Rodriguez and Graham are on a race to the top.

Texas A&M head coach Kevin Sumlin.

Photo by AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez

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Utah State (+7) Utah	27-20	WON	25 Units
San Diego St (-6½) Army	42-7	WON	25 Units
LA Tech (-3) Houston	56-42	WON	200 Units
49ers (+4½) Packers	30-22	WON	50 Units
Broncos (-1½) Steelers	31-19	WON	15 Units
Notre Dame (+6) Mich St	20-3	WON	15 Units
UL Monroe (-20) Tulane	63-10	WON	200 Units
Cincinnati (-20) Miami Ohio	52-14	WON	15 Units
Fresno St (-17½) CO St	28-7	WON	200 Units
Jets (-3½) Colts	35-9	WON	10 Units
Giants (+6½) 49ers	26-3	WON	15 Units
Syracuse (-4) Connecticut	40-10	WON	10 Units
Mich St (+9½) Michigan	10-12	WON	15 Units
Texans (-13) Dolphins	30-10	WON	100 Units
Notre Dame (+12½) Okla	30-13	WON	15 Units
Giants (-2½) Cowboys	29-24	WON	10 Units
GA Tech (-8½) Maryland	33-13	WON	15 Units
Panthers (+3) Redskins	21-13	WON	10 Units
Falcons (-3½) Cowboys	19-13	WON	15 Units
Texas A&M (+14) Alabama	29-24	WON	15 Units
Ravens (-7½) Raiders	55-20	WON	10 Units
Bengals (-3½) Chiefs	28-6	WON	10 Units
Patriots (-9½) Colts	59-24	WON	15 Units
Broncos (-10) Raiders	26-13	WON	10 Units
49ers (+4½) Patriots	41-34	WON	15 Units

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Johnny Football: What does he do for an encore?

By Dennis Dodd

Photo by RD Moore

Eric Hyman's nephew called fraud on his uncle.

Hyman, Texas A&M's athletic director, brought over one of the first Johnny Manziel Heisman posters. The quarterback's signature was included on the poster but — as noticed by the nephew — it was a printed facsimile.

"I had to get another poster and have Johnny sign it," Hyman said. "Now, I'm his favorite uncle."

They lurk everywhere, trying to get a piece of the athletic equivalent of Justin Bieber.

"From football player making headlines to being on TMZ to being a celebrity," Manziel recalled of his whirlwind year.

Since Johnny Football broke national last year, there have been cease-and-desist letters aimed at those attempting to illegally profit from his accomplishments. A&M officials are familiar with trademark violations, and unlicensed Manziel products on the streets and the internet.

Just walking across campus has become a challenge, judging by his decision to take online classes. (Manziel said he would take some summer school classes in person.)

But on Dec. 8, the quarterback had one final exam left following his Heisman victory. He ended up posing for pictures with a professor and everyone in the department. It took him 30 minutes to get out of the economics building. A normal existence left the building shortly thereafter.

"I have to realize that's not how life can be for me anymore," Manziel said.

Lots has changed in College Station: The Big 12 is in the rear view mirror. Texas is down. A&M is up — way up. There was the first 11-win season in 14 years. There was that for-the-ages win at No. 1 Alabama.

A *Heisman*. No, not just a Heisman, a Heisman *phenomenon*.

A top five finish. A possible top-five beginning to 2013.

Out of Texas' shadow, into the national conversation, and with three years' eligibility left for its quarterback, what does A&M now do for an encore?

"We just got here," Aggies coach Kevin Sumlin said.

That's the scary part. Things can get better.

"The thing about this offense is in Year One it's kind of experimenting, learning about it," said offensive coordinator Jake Spavital. "Year Two is normally when they go off in the passing aspect."

That was quite an experiment in 2012. Manziel set the SEC total offense record.

"Now, he's handing me the keys to the Cadillac," Spavital said of former coordinator Kliff Kingsbury, now the Texas Tech head coach. "Johnny's going to be a better passer (this season)."

A year ago at this time, the program was two games over .500 since 2007 and didn't have a starting quarterback. Johnny Football "went from athlete who was playing quarterback to being a quarterback who was an athlete," Sumlin said.

His Twitter following grew from 3,000 to 300,000. Those Twitterati practically had kittens in the offseason when Manziel was shown in a TV feature driving away from the football facility in a Mercedes C 63 AMG.

His second one, actually. His first Mercedes, a high school graduation gift, was hit in the football facility parking lot. Dad, John Paul, works at a car dealership.

"It's a touchy area," Manziel said.

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

"It's another gray area with the stereotype, how a majority of guys in the NCAA come from families that aren't like mine, that aren't as fortunate as mine having money."

In December at the Dallas airport, a "soldier" convinced Texas A&M's quarterback that his platoon back in Iraq were big fans. It would mean a lot to them if Manziel would sign a stack of A&M helmet decals. "A mountain high worth of stuff," Manziel said, who had an hour layover and wanted to be patriotic.

"Sure enough," Manziel said. "My dad gets a text. They're on eBay. Somebody took all those helmet stickers and slapped them on blank helmets."

His heart melted one night in the Bright Football Complex parking lot after a study hall. There were two men sitting in a car with memorabilia all made out personally to individuals. All Johnny had to do was sign his name and make folks happy. Advisors already had told him that personalized autographs devalue the souvenir for resale so they couldn't be cashing in ... could they?

"What happened after I signed, they wiped the names off," Manziel said.

Hello, again, autograph black market.

Hyman convened a Johnny Football summit in his office in the offseason. Hyman invited coaches, compliance, marketing, Manziel's parents, The Franchise himself. They talked about everything from security at practice to academics. The AD consulted two-time Heisman winner Archie Griffin, and Mike Hill, Florida's external relations guy who handled the Tebow situation.

Griffin related that the toughest thing about fame is "learning how to say no."

"The meeting that Eric Hyman had wasn't a get-after-you, tell-you-what-to-do meeting," Sumlin said. "(It was) 'We're here for you. You don't have to handle this on your own.'"

Hyman said that back in New York at the December ceremony, "What I told his dad and mom at the Heisman is, 'He's no longer a freshman; he's no longer a sophomore; he's no longer a junior; no longer a senior. He's a Heisman.'"

"From where he is today to where he was a few months ago, he's learned how to handle situations."

OFFENSE

Johnny Manziel

Ka'Deem Carey

Lache Seastrunk

Marqise Lee

Amari Cooper

Austin Seferian-Jenkins

FIRST TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Johnny Manziel	6-1	200	So.	Texas A&M
RB	Ka'Deem Carey	5-10	196	Jr.	Arizona
RB	Lache Seastrunk	5-10	210	Jr.	Baylor
WR	Marqise Lee	6-0	195	Jr.	USC
WR	Amari Cooper	6-1	202	So.	Alabama
TE	Austin Seferian-Jenkins	6-6	266	Jr.	Washington
C	Gabe Ikard	6-3	298	Sr.	Oklahoma
OL	Cyril Richardson	6-5	335	Sr.	Baylor
OL	David Yankey	6-5	311	Sr.	Stanford
OL	Taylor Lewan	6-8	308	Sr.	Michigan
OL	Jake Matthews	6-5	305	Sr.	Texas A&M
PK	Cairo Santos	5-8	160	Sr.	Tulane

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Braxton Miller	6-2	210	Jr.	Ohio State
RB	Todd Gurley	6-1	218	So.	Georgia
RB	T.J. Yeldon	6-2	218	So.	Alabama
WR	Sammy Watkins	6-1	205	Jr.	Clemson
WR	Jordan Matthews	6-3	205	Sr.	Vanderbilt
TE	Jacob Pedersen	6-4	241	Sr.	Wisconsin
C	Travis Swanson	6-5	305	Jr.	Arkansas
OL	Spencer Long	6-4	315	Sr.	Nebraska
OL	Gabe Jackson	6-4	335	Sr.	Mississippi State
OL	James Hurst	6-7	305	Sr.	North Carolina
OL	Zack Martin	6-4	304	Sr.	Notre Dame
PK	Chris Boswell	6-2	200	Sr.	Rice

Gabe Ikard

Cyril Richardson

Jake Matthews

Taylor Lewan

David Yankey

Cairo Santos

Hold on to your helmets, Clowney may sack Heisman

By Brad Senkiw

Photo by Joe Robbins

In one play, Jadeveon Clowney went from star on the rise to superstar on the Heisman watch list.

The South Carolina defensive end, who was already having an All-American season, said he was ticked off at the beginning of a Michigan drive in the fourth quarter of the Outback Bowl on New Year's Day. A measurement call by the officials — it can only be described as historically bad — robbed the Gamecocks of a first down.

With his team trailing Michigan 22-21, Clowney said he knew it was time for a big play. He just had no idea what the next snap would do for his image.

As Michigan running back Vincent Smith took the handoff, Clowney parted the Wolverines' offensive line like the Red Sea, launched himself at full speed into Smith and violently dislodged Smith's helmet from his head.

As the helmet flew back five yards, the ball also came loose and Clowney snagged it with his left hand while lying on top of Smith.

"The Hit" and fumble recovery changed the game's momentum, leading to a Gamecock touchdown and eventual victory, giving South Carolina its second consecutive 11-win season.

"We needed a big play and he came through," linebacker Kaiwan Lewis said.

It was also the perfect springboard for 2013.

Clowney enters this year as the nation's top defensive player, setting himself up for a legitimate shot at winning the Heisman Trophy.

College football's top honor has gone to only one primarily defensive player — Michigan defensive back Charles Woodson. But Woodson boosted his resume by playing some offense and being a dynamic punt returner.

Clowney said there's no way he'll be lining up on the other side of the ball this year just to increase his Heisman potential.

"It's kind of strange, but (offense is) what the people like, touchdowns and more touchdowns," said Clowney, who has 21 career sacks and eight forced fumbles. "They don't worry about the sacks and stuff, so they feel like offense is more an individual side, I guess."

Clowney earned Freshman All-America honors in 2011, but his superstar status took off in 2012 when he recorded 54 tackles (40 solo), 13 sacks and 23.5 tackles for a loss. The latter two are single-season school records.

Clowney became the first sophomore to win the Ted Hendricks Award, given to the nation's top defensive end, and he was a finalist for other awards while earning unanimous All-America honors.

The game with "The Hit" wasn't the only one Clowney changed last season.

"One of the biggest sacks I made was against Tennessee," Clowney said. "They were driving down the field to beat us and I came around and (made) a sack and fumble. All my sacks against Georgia were pretty good."

Against Clemson, South Carolina's bitter in-state rival, Clowney had his single greatest performance. He sacked All-American quarterback Tajh Boyd 4.5

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

times, helping secure South Carolina's fourth consecutive victory in the rivalry.

His size and incredible speed made Clowney one of the most ballyhooed high school recruits in the past 20 years, so the attention surrounding the 6-6, 272-pound junior has always been intense.

But the intensity is turned up a notch leading into this season as he's on the cover of multiple magazines and participating in exclusive interviews with ESPN. Media flock to him every time he talks and he can't go anywhere without drawing a crowd, posing for pictures and signing autographs.

There was even a national story suggesting that he should sit out this season to avoid injury, thereby guaranteeing him a high draft spot in 2014. College football players aren't eligible for the draft until three years after their graduation from high school.

Clowney dismissed the notion and said he found out from teammates that it had become a national topic, proving how little he pays attention to his own press.

"I'm just really going to deal with it and keep playing like I've been playing, 100 percent," said Clowney, "Just try to go out there and do better than I did last year."

He added to his own lore when he confirmed reports that he ran a 40-yard dash in 4.54 seconds in the offseason.

He's also added 13 pounds since the end of last season and has worked on avoiding run blocking and understanding the playbook to become "the total package."

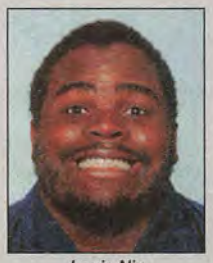
South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier, who's won a Heisman himself and has coached another recipient, is helping his star player handle the attention.

"Hopefully, he will continue to sort of stay in the background, staying out of sight of a lot of stuff that goes on," Spurrier said. "He knows that and he's done a pretty good job of it."

"My goals are set very high," said Clowney, who needs nine sacks to become the school's all-time career sack leader. "I want to make more tackles for a loss and not necessarily win the Heisman, but if it's there, it's there."

DEFENSE

Jadeveon Clowney


Louis Nix

Will Sutton

Stephon Tuitt

Anthony Barr

C.J. Mosley

FIRST TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DE	Jadeveon Clowney	6-6	272	Jr.	South Carolina
DE	Stephon Tuitt	6-6	303	Jr.	Notre Dame
DT	Will Sutton	6-1	288	Sr.	Arizona State
DT	Louis Nix	6-3	326	Sr.	Notre Dame
LB	Anthony Barr	6-4	245	Sr.	UCLA
LB	Kyle Van Noy	6-3	235	Sr.	BYU
LB	C.J. Mosley	6-2	232	Sr.	Alabama
DB	Bradley Roby	5-11	193	Jr.	Ohio State
DB	Jason Verrett	5-10	176	Sr.	TCU
DB	Lamarcus Joyner	5-8	195	Sr.	Florida State
DB	Ed Reynolds	6-2	205	Sr.	Stanford
P	Kyle Christy	6-3	193	Jr.	Florida

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	Jackson Jeffcoat	6-5	245	Sr.	Texas
DL	Devonte Fields	6-5	240	So.	TCU
DL	Aaron Donald	6-0	275	Sr.	Pittsburgh
DL	Anthony Johnson	6-3	304	Jr.	LSU
LB	Ryan Shazier	6-2	222	Jr.	Ohio State
LB	Shayne Skov	6-3	244	Sr.	Stanford
LB	A.J. Johnson	6-2	240	So.	Tennessee
DB	Ty Zimmerman	6-1	204	Jr.	Kansas State
DB	Aaron Colvin	6-0	181	Sr.	Oklahoma
DB	Ifo Ekpre-Olomu	5-10	190	Jr.	Oregon
DB	Craig Loston	6-2	205	Sr.	LSU
P	Richie Leone	6-3	215	Sr.	Houston

Kyle Van Noy

Jason Verrett

Bradley Roby

Lamarcus Joyner

Ed Reynolds

Kyle Christy

PLAYER RATINGS

QUARTERBACKS

TAJH BOYD

Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

Clemson's Boyd delays pro career for chance at greatness

When he walked out of the Georgia Dome victorious after midnight on Jan. 1, Tajh Boyd told himself he was gone — 100-percent gone — to the NFL after finishing his redshirt junior season at Clemson.

He said he didn't inform anyone of these plans at the time. The only person on the team who had an idea was running back Andre Ellington, whom Boyd told before the Chick-fil-A Bowl on New Year's Eve that he'd probably leave if he engineered a win over LSU.

That's how close Clemson came to having a major void at the quarterback position in 2013, a season in which all things seem possible for a program that has won 21 games in the past two seasons with Boyd leading the way.

Indianapolis Colts tight end Dwayne Allen, a close friend of Boyd's and a confidant during the QB's decision-making process, left Clemson a year ago because he'd grown bored of the college thing and was ready for football to become a business.

A year later, Boyd elected to stay in school because he's not ready for the business side of it. He's still enjoying being The Man at Clemson, still loving the adulation from fellow students and fans in general, still invested not just in making himself better, but making his program better.

And it's probably not even in that order. Boyd was asked if this decision was money-driven or legacy-driven. Actually, neither.

"Team-driven, honestly," he said.

Boyd said he wants to be distinguished among the great quarterbacks, as anyone in his position would. But he believes that's "for everybody else to judge" and is secondary to his prime objective.

"This team has an opportunity to be mentioned among the great teams," he said.

A mere two years ago, Boyd was a redshirt freshman backup who was inserted into the final two games against South Carolina and South Florida with Clemson facing big deficits. There wasn't much for anyone in orange to feel good about at that time, when the Tigers suffered their first losing season in 12 years.

So sitting in the present, Boyd would be justified for feeling completely content with what he's accomplished so far. He's guided this program to back-to-back 10-win seasons after Clemson went two decades without a double-digit win total.

In 2011, he helped deliver the Tigers' first ACC title since 1991, knocking off previous conference dominator Virginia Tech by a combined score of 61-13 in two meetings.

And at the end of last season, Boyd helped lead Clemson to its biggest win in years with a 25-24 defeat of LSU, putting forth a gutsy performance in the face of constant pressure from perhaps the best defensive line in college football.

Boyd has been a key figure in coach Dabo Swinney's revitalization of Clemson football, the same program that often underachieved under former coach Tommy Bowden.

Under third-year offensive coordinator Chad Morris and his cutting-edge offense, Boyd has thrown 69 touchdown passes in the past two seasons for an offense that has improved its points per game from 24 in 2010 to 33 in 2011 to 41 last season.

The 6-1, 225-pound Boyd will be looking to throw for more than 3,800 yards for the third consecutive season. He'll be looking to cut down on his interceptions (13 last season), focusing on footwork and decision-making. Improve those areas, and his draft stock — so-so after last season — will begin to rise.

The Tigers finished 2012 with an 11-2 record and a top-10 ranking according to the coaches, their highest postseason ranking since 1990. Boyd still has visions of guiding this program into contention for a BCS title, the same vision Swinney shared with him in January 2009 when recruiting the quarterback while shooting baskets in Swinney's driveway.

"I love Clemson. I love college football," Boyd said.

"I think I'm good enough to go out and compete (in the NFL), but at the same time, I'm not ready to stop this right now."

— Larry Williams

TOP QUARTERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Johnny Manziel**	So.	**Texas A&M**
	Love him, hate him, you won't be able to take your eyes off him.		
2.	**Braxton Miller**	Jr.	**Ohio State**
	Had six 100-yard rushing games in 2012; passing will be much improved.		
3.	**AJ McCarron**	Sr.	**Alabama**
	He's got the winning thing down pat; can make all the throws.		
4.	**Tajh Boyd**	Sr.	**Clemson**
	Enters the season with 8,053 career passing yards, 73 TD passes.		
5.	**Aaron Murray**	Sr.	**Georgia**
	Will be worth returning to school for one more shot at Alabama.		
6.	**Marcus Mariota**	So.	**Oregon**
	Athleticism, arm not just perfect for Ducks' offense, perfect for any O.		
7.	**Teddy Bridgewater**	Jr.	**Louisville**
	His physical skills could land him among top few picks in 2014 draft.		
8.	**Derek Carr**	Sr.	**Fresno State**
	MW Offensive POY last year, setting league mark with 4,104 passing yards.		
9	**Brett Hundley**	So.	**UCLA**
	If he had played as true frosh, would Rick Neuheisel still be coaching?		
10.	**Bryn Renner**	Sr.	**North Carolina**
	Has a big-boy arm and back-to-back 3,000-yard seasons.		
11.	**David Fales**	Sr.	**San Jose State**
	His 4,193 yards, 33 TDs last season lifted Spartans into rare air.		
12.	**Jordan Lynch**	Sr.	**Northern Illinois**
	Averaged 353.8 yards of offense, but did FSU burst his bubble in bowl?		
13.	**Taylor Martinez**	Sr.	**Nebraska**
	More than 4,900 total yards last season; still working on those mechanics.		
14.	**Chelf/Lunt/Walsh**	N/A	**Oklahoma State**
	Mike Gundy will take his pick in the fall. Nice "problem" to have.		
15.	**Casey Pachall**	Sr.	**TCU**
	He'll win back starting job and be back to his 2011 self.		
16.	**Stephen Morris**	Sr.	**Miami**
	Now, an effective, efficient leader who threw for 3,345 yards last year.		
17.	**Devin Gardner**	Jr.	**Michigan**
	Supremely athletic, and U-M will appreciate his passing chops.		
18.	**David Ash**	Jr.	**Texas**
	It's his team now, taking ownership of a new push-the-pace offense.		
19.	**Chuckie Keeton**	Jr.	**Utah State**
	Nearly 4,000 total yards last season; will see better competition this year.		
20.	**Connor Shaw**	Sr.	**South Carolina**
	Even if he shares position, his all-around skills and moxie will be key.		
21.	**Kevin Hogan**	So.	**Stanford**
	Love what he did for Stanford late last season; size, tools, 'it' factor.		
22.	**Bryce Petty**	Jr.	**Baylor**
	New starter has the tools to put up boffo numbers like his predecessors.		
23.	**Jeff Driskel**	Jr.	**Florida**
	It's not like he doesn't have the tools. If UF's receivers step up ...		
24.	**Cody Fajardo**	Jr.	**Nevada**
	No, we won't say 'Kaepernick', but Fajardo is among best dual threats.		
25.	**Brett Smith**	Jr.	**Wyoming**
	Looks like the real deal, and he finished 11th nationally in efficiency.		

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TeamKaDeem encounters rocky offseason

Ka'DEEM CAREY

Photo by Mark J. Rebilas-USA TODAY Sports

There was no Heisman launch for Ka'Deem Carey this spring. No touting of the nation's leading rusher in 2012. No promotion for the first player in Arizona history to be a consensus All-American on offense.

Just silence.

It wasn't a very good offseason for Carey.

After rushing for a school-record 1,929 yards, Carey had legal trouble with his pregnant ex-girlfriend and got kicked out of an Arizona home basketball game after a verbal altercation with a police officer. Coach Rich Rodriguez promptly put Carey on media lockdown through the spring, which, in turn, stalled the publicity campaign the university had ready, centered on a theme of "TeamKaDeem."

As for what it means for the fall ... well, it's basically a case of Keep Calm and Carey On.

RichRod's prized junior went through spring ball, by the end of which he was facing a July court date for misdemeanor assault and disorderly conduct. The coach said Carey properly took care of business during spring practice, warning, "We've got close tabs on him. He knows that. He knows he made a mistake and he has to prove what kind of person he is."

Carey has too much at stake to blow it by being a knucklehead.

He was the centerpiece to Mike Stoops' final Arizona recruiting class in 2011, a local kid with a big reputation. He split carries as a true freshman, and then last year was unleashed in Rodriguez's fast-paced read-option offense, a space-creating attack perfect for Carey's style.

He's not a straight-line blazer, but he has exceptional vision, following the blocking into the hole ... and then cutting past the first tackler. Off he goes. Nobody in the country had more carries of 10-plus yards (59) and 20-plus yards (23).

Carey wears No. 25 — as did his uncle, Vance Johnson, a former Arizona star running back who gained greater fame as part of the Three Amigos receiving corps with the Denver Broncos.

Rob Rang, a senior analyst for NFLDraftScout.com, studied Carey's performance in the New Mexico Bowl last season and was reminded of a different No. 25 — one who plays for the Philadelphia Eagles.

"I was impressed to see him consistently make people miss and consistently turn nothing into 5-, 8-plus yard gains," Rang said. "I mean, he's dynamic. He looked like LeSean McCoy out there, bouncing back and forth.

"There is no doubt that Rich Rodriguez's offense helps running backs, but the elusiveness Carey has — the starts and stops — he is fun to watch."

It was never more fun than when Carey embarrassed Colorado on Nov. 10. He carried 25 times, breaking the Pac-12 rushing record with 366 yards and tying a school record with five rushing touchdowns. You might call it a Ka'Dream day. It was the ninth-best single-game rushing total in NCAA history, 40 behind the record held by TCU's LaDainian Tomlinson.

He averaged 6.4 yards per carry and set a school record with 23 rushing touchdowns. He dearly wanted 2,000 yards, falling short despite an epic run of 914 yards *in his final four games.*

Carey has the quick feet you would expect from a back of his size (5-10, 196) and the power — or just the sheer determination — of someone 20 pounds heavier. RichRod says Carey "runs angry."

Offensive coordinator Calvin Magee adds that Carey also runs smart. During 2012 fall camp, Carey learned to stop freelancing and start trusting the design of the play.

"He started really seeing and being on the same page with what the line is trying to do on run plays," Magee said.

"And when you understand that, you understand why you can't just see gaps and what we call 'take the cheese.' Don't take the cheese by seeing holes that aren't there. Stay disciplined to your reads."

Now it is up to Carey to stay disciplined off the field.

Carey didn't always follow Rodriguez's offseason advice of "stay humble, stay hungry." There was nothing to suggest, though, that Carey couldn't find redemption in the fall.

Keep that Heisman campaign ready.

— Anthony Gimino

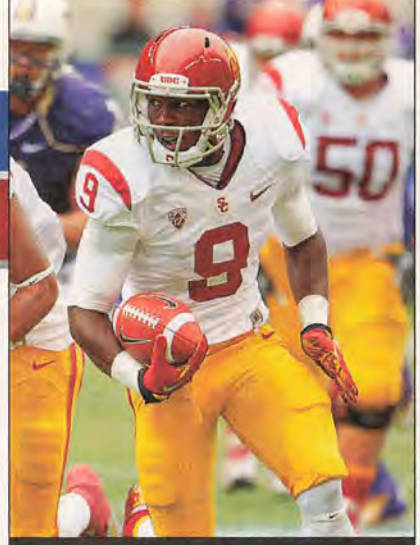
TOP RUNNING BACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Ka'Deem Carey** In RichRod's offense, Carey should repeat as nation's leading rusher.	Jr.	Arizona
2.	**Lache Seastrunk** Ran for 637 yards and 9.1 per carry in final four games of last season.	Jr.	Baylor
3.	**Todd Gurley** Strong enough as true frosh to handle rigors of SEC; nine 100-yard games.	So.	Georgia
4.	**T.J. Yeldon** Ripped the salty defenses of Georgia and Notre Dame to end last season.	So.	Alabama
5.	**Bishop Sankey** Out of nowhere last season, 1,439 rushing yards and plenty of flash.	Jr.	Washington
6.	**Duke Johnson** Freshman All-America season included 977 yards on only 139 carries.	So.	Miami
7.	**Carlos Hyde** Strong, healthy second half of last season portends a huge 2013.	Sr.	Ohio State
8.	**Jeremy Hill** Hill headlines LSU's still-deep cast of runners (Alfred Blue, Kenny Hilliard).	So.	LSU
9.	**De'Anthony Thomas** Durable? Whatever. Such a thrill we'll list him here and at all-purpose.	Jr.	Oregon
10.	**Ameer Abdullah** The clear No. 1 for Big Red now; six 100-yard games last season.	Jr.	Nebraska
11.	**Venric Mark** Super shifty skills (and 1,366 yards) great fit for Northwestern's offense.	Sr.	Northwestern
12.	**Dri Archer** Super return skills (see all-purpose); also 1,429 rush yds, 9 per carry.	Sr.	Kent State
13.	**Tre Mason** Mason (1,002 yards) will provide giddy-up in Gus Malzahn's hurry-up.	Jr.	Auburn
14.	**Damien Williams** Does Texas still have nightmares about his 95-yard TD run last season?	Sr.	Oklahoma
15.	**John Hubert** Elusive at 5-7, he'll have a bigger burden without QB Collin Klein.	Sr.	Kansas State
16.	**James Sims** Led the Big 12 in rushing yards per game last season with 112.6.	Sr.	Kansas
17.	**Keith Marshall** The other half of "Gurshall," he has explosive running skills.	So.	Georgia
18.	**Silas Redd** Ex-Nittany Lion further established as No. 1 back for USC this year.	Sr.	USC
19.	**Jonathan Gray** Living in a crowded UT backfield, but too talented to leave off this list.	So.	Texas
20.	**Melvin Gordon** Gordon or tag-teamer James White? Gordon will be the breakout star.	So.	Wisconsin
21.	**Charles Sims** His 6.6-yard career average and receiving ability makes him AAC's best.	Sr.	Houston
22.	**Antonio Andrews** Rushed for 100 yards in 10 of last 11 games of 2012 season.	Sr.	Western Kentucky
23.	**Adam Muema** Can't argue with the numbers: 1,502 yards, 6.2 per carry, 16 TDs.	Jr.	San Diego State
24.	**Storm Woods** Adding strength to handle more carries after 940-yard debut.	So.	Oregon State
25.	**Jeff Scott** Rebels have something cooking with Scott and QB Bo Wallace.	Sr.	Ole Miss
	Not rated due to injury: **Fitzgerald Toussaint, Michigan**		

PLAYER RATINGS

RECEIVERS

Defense, too? Motivated Lee has more to do at USC



MARQISE LEE

Photo by Dave Sizer

The day Robert Woods set the USC record for career receptions, his longtime teammate, roommate and close friend, fellow wide receiver Marqise Lee, offered congratulations and issued a promise.

"I'm going to break the record next year," Lee said.

No doubt.

Woods caught 252 passes before leaving after his junior season. Lee already has 191 receptions.

Basically, it wouldn't be wise to ever bet against Lee doing anything.

He won the Biletnikoff Award last year in a breakthrough season that included a Pac-12 record 345 yards receiving against Arizona. Lee, by virtue of his All-America status, earned the right for a plaque bearing his likeness to be mounted at USC during the offseason.

"I've got to really compete to make sure and let everybody know why I should be on the wall with those great players," he said.

What can Lee do to surpass his magical 2012, when he caught 118 passes for 1,721 yards and 14 touchdowns? The answer could be playing defense. With the Trojans' secondary struggling in the spring, coach Lane Kiffin said he might let Lee play some cornerback.

"I know I can do it," Lee said. "Maybe not every play or anything like that, but I can do spot duty. If they want me to, I'm willing to do it. I would have done it last season, too."

Lee lined up at safety for one play last season, but the opposing team received a delay-of-game penalty, and he never played defense again. Perhaps one reason the junior is up for anything is because this is expected to be his last season before departing for the NFL.

"My time will come around," Lee said.

The only thing that might stop Lee is whether USC's new quarterback can get him the ball as often as Matt Barkley did in 2012. Lee worked with Max Wittek, Cody Kessler and Max Browne in the spring.

"To tell you the truth, the one I feel most comfortable with right now is (Wittek) because he played two games last year," Lee said.

As long as the new quarterback is competent and feeds him the ball, Lee will be among the frontrunners for the Heisman Trophy. Even though some criticized USC's offense for focusing too much on Lee, he will still be its focal point.

"At times, we focused too much on him ... and we took away from other great playmakers like Robert and our tight ends, who were phenomenal players," Barkley said. "Defenses saw that and kind of overcrowded Marqise. He still managed to make plays."

Too much focus on Lee?

Kiffin responded by saying, "I don't think that's true."

He also compared Lee to basketball superstars like LeBron James and said you can never get players like that enough touches. Kiffin is well aware of how easily Lee sheds or fakes-out tacklers after making catches.

"I've only seen two skill guys like that ever," Kiffin said.

One, he said, was USC's Reggie Bush.

The other is Lee.

One thing Kiffin does not need to worry about is Lee becoming too cocky or complacent to give his all for the Trojans. Even though Lee had that epic day against Arizona — he caught 16 passes for those 345 yards, scored two touchdowns, snagged a two-point conversion and returned a kickoff 72 yards — he left the field in tears.

Lee was distraught after failing to catch a Hail Mary pass on the final play of a 39-36 loss in Tucson.

"I always expect to catch the ball," Lee said.

That mindset continued into the spring, when Lee issued another promise for 2013.

"I will not drop a pass this season," he said. "And if for some reason, I do drop one, that's it. I will not drop another one."

— Scott Wolf

TOP WIDE RECEIVERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Marqise Lee**	Jr.	USC
	2012 Biletnikoff winner more dangerous than anybody after the catch.		
2.	**Amari Cooper**	So.	Alabama
	One rival coach told us, "He's like Jerry Rice. You can't cover him."		
3.	**Sammy Watkins**	Jr.	Clemson
	It's bounce-back time. Remember his 82 receptions, 1,219 yards as frosh.		
4.	**Jordan Matthews**	Sr.	Vanderbilt
	Helping lead Vandy surge: 94 catches for 1,323 yards, 8 TDs in 2012.		
5.	**Josh Stewart**	Jr.	Oklahoma State
	Some OSU QB can count on him — a lot. Made 101 catches last season.		
6.	**Mike Evans**	So.	Texas A&M
	Johnny Football's go-to guy, with 82 catches for 1,105 yards last year.		
7.	**Cody Hoffman**	Sr.	BYU
	Great size and production; will be top pass-catcher in school history.		
8.	**Brandin Cooks**	Jr.	Oregon State
	Will be dynamite big-play No. 1 guy now that Markus Wheaton is gone.		
9.	**Tevin Reese**	Sr.	Baylor
	That speed in that offense? Watch him fly in 2013.		
10.	**Davante Adams**	So.	Fresno State
	Record-breaking debut season with 102 catches, 1,312 yards, 14 TDs.		
11.	**Eric Ward**	Sr.	Texas Tech
	Has 166 catches, with 23 touchdowns, in the past two seasons.		
12.	**Mike Davis**	Sr.	Texas
	Development of QB David Ash will push Davis well past 1,000 yards.		
13.	**DeVante Parker**	Jr.	Louisville
	Teddy Bridgewater's favorite target; 18.6 ypc and 10 TDs last year.		
14.	**Kasen Williams**	Jr.	Washington
	Former big-time recruit can make the jump to elite after 77-catch season.		
15.	**Jared Abbrederis**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	Love the career average of 16.7 yards per reception.		
16.	**Kenny Bell**	Jr.	Nebraska
	Made eight TD catches last season — all were from 25 yards or more.		
17.	**Donte Moncrief**	Jr.	Ole Miss
	Strong finish to 2012, with 27 catches, 439 yards, 5 TDs in last four games.		
18.	**Noel Grigsby**	Sr.	San Jose State
	One of college football's most prolific receivers in past three-year span.		
19.	**Allen Robinson**	Jr.	Penn State
	More than ever, needs to be team spark after 1,000-yard season.		
20.	**Dorial Green-Beckham**	So.	Missouri
	Freak athlete, former top recruit, primed for huge season on the outside.		
	Not rated due to injury: **Austin Hill, Arizona**		

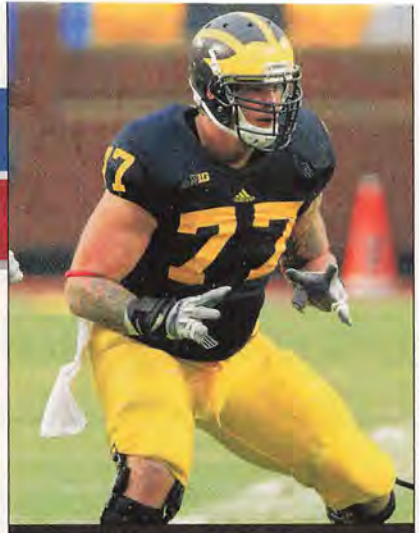
TOP TIGHT ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Austin Seferian-Jenkins**	Jr.	Washington
	Just needs to stay out of trouble off field; rest will take care of itself.		
2.	**Jacob Pedersen**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	Big Ten is flush at TE; Pedersen was first-team coaches' pick in 2012.		
3.	**Chris Coyle**	Sr.	Arizona State
	Overshadowed in league last season, even with 57 catches for 696 yards.		
4.	**Devin Funchess**	So.	Michigan
	Betting on the future; most athletic potential among Big Ten tight ends.		
5.	**Kyle Carter**	So.	Penn State
	Bill O'Brien knows a few things about how to use a TE.		

PLAYER RATINGS

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Worth the wait? Wolverines' Lewan not worried about looking 'stupid'



TAYLOR LEWAN

Photo by AP Photo/Carlos Osorio

Taylor Lewan knows how his scouting report reads. He's been reminded countless times that he supposedly made a mistake by turning his back on the millions the NFL had to offer him this year.

Following a stellar junior season in which he earned All-America honors, the 6-8, 309-pound left tackle was widely projected as a first-round lock, with many top draft experts planting him firmly among their top 10 picks.

But opinions about him quickly changed when he announced in January that he'd return to Michigan for his senior season, with hopes of helping deliver the Wolverines' first Big Ten championship since 2004.

Suddenly, the somewhat zany offensive lineman was painted as someone who had zoomed past colorful and right into crazy territory. Total strangers offered their two cents, including one woman who approached Lewan and his father at a local grocery store to tell the tackle he had made a mistake.

She wasn't alone.

"It was above a baker's dozen," Lewan said when asked how many people had questioned his decision-making. "But I'm not too worried about that. If I do the job I'm supposed to do, I won't be looking too stupid for much longer."

Lewan will anchor a Michigan offensive line that will have three new starters this fall. Once known for his inconsistent play and penchant for penalties, he is now considered a mentor, helping bring along new members of a fraternity of linemen steeped in Michigan tradition. Lewan says he will play with a mauler's mentality.

He led the band of brothers that called themselves the "Muzzy Maulers" in the spring, a nod to their style of play ... as well as their mustaches and facial hair.

Being able to pass the torch, as it was passed to him by former Wolverines standouts like former No. 1 NFL pick Jake Long, was part of the reason Lewan chose to return.

Michigan coach Brady Hoke said the choice isn't one that just impacts Michigan, but will also ultimately benefit Lewan, who, barring injury, should be among the top picks in the 2014 NFL Draft. Lewan draws comparisons to Central Michigan's Eric Fisher and Texas A&M's Luke Joeckel, the top two picks in the 2013 draft, respectively.

While he chases the Big Ten championship, Lewan will continue to hone his game. He'll attempt to perfect blocking techniques and to deal with the double-teams, while also continuing to enjoy a college experience he says he would have missed out on had he left for the NFL this year.

Hoke noticed a difference after Lewan declared he would finish his college career with the Wolverines.

"From a field standpoint, he's a better technician, and that's one of the things he wanted to get flawless at," Hoke said.

"From a leadership and maturity standpoint, I think he's grown leaps and bounds, and that that's the exciting part. He's demonstrating how to do things, instead of ... just talking about it."

Lewan expects some to continue to doubt his motives for returning for one final season. He has built for the future, taking out an insurance policy in case of injury, but will play with the fervor for which he's become known.

Lewan will focus on leaving Michigan on his terms. If he fulfills his tasks, he says the rest will take care of itself, including the millions that come with being a first-round draft pick.

If people don't get that, Lewan says, so be it.

"You can go through your whole life and you go in the NFL and do all these great things that hopefully I can do in the future," Lewan said.

"But (unless) you put a winged helmet on and play the game of football in the Big House and you have 115,000 fans cheering for you every game — if you haven't played football at Michigan — you're not going to understand at all why I chose to stay."

— Jeff Arnold

TOP CENTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Gabe Ikard**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	Two-time All-Big 12 performer will show the way for new OU QB.		
2.	**Travis Swanson**	Sr.	Arkansas
	Bielema: Swanson potentially better than first-rounder Travis Frederick.		
3.	**Hroniss Grasu**	Jr.	Oregon
	Was a first-team All-Pac-12 pick as a sophomore for always-good line.		
4.	**Bryan Stork**	Sr.	Florida State
	Has 27 career starts and was a second-team All-ACC selection last season.		
5.	**B.J. Finney**	Jr.	Kansas State
	Team captain is one of college's best walk-on-makes-good stories.		
6.	**Russell Bodine**	Jr.	North Carolina
	He and LT James Hurst give the Heels two all-stars on the line.		
7.	**Zac Kerin**	Sr.	Toledo
	First-team All-MAC last season; we hear MAC OLs can be pretty good.		
8.	**Isaac Seumalo**	So.	Oregon State
	Was a revelation as true freshman; Oregon State's line is strong.		

TOP GUARDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Cyril Richardson**	Sr.	Baylor
	Says Baylor coach Art Briles: "Such complete domination every snap."		
2.	**David Yankey**	Sr.	Stanford
	Moves from left tackle to his more natural position of left guard this year.		
3.	**Spencer Long**	Sr.	Nebraska
	Second-team AP All-American last season; academic star, too.		
4.	**Gabe Jackson**	Sr.	Mississippi State
	Has started 39 consecutive games; was second-team All-SEC in 2012.		
5.	**Anthony Steen**	Sr.	Alabama
	The film review says he was not responsible for allowing a sack in 2012.		
6.	**Xavier Su'a-Filo**	Jr.	UCLA
	His return from church mission last season gave UCLA line needed bite.		
7.	**Andrew Norwell**	Sr.	Ohio State
	Big Ten first-teamer is one of four returning starters on Buckeyes' line.		
8.	**John Urschel**	Sr.	Penn State
	First-team All-Big Ten; now a grad student math whiz with 4.0 GPA.		

TOP TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Taylor Lewan**	Sr.	Michigan
	Leader of U-M's "Muzzy Maulers;" fear the blocking, not the mustaches.		
2.	**Jake Matthews**	Sr.	Texas A&M
	Moving to left side will enhance already sky-high draft stock.		
3.	**James Hurst**	Sr.	North Carolina
	Was the top tackle in the ACC last season, will be again.		
4.	**Zack Martin**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	A key holdover from one of best Notre Dame lines of recent times.		
5.	**Tiny Richardson**	Jr.	Tennessee
	With that nickname he's gotta be big (6-6, 332); 2nd-team All-SEC in 2012.		
6.	**Cyrus Kouandjio**	Jr.	Alabama
	Watch him become yet another Alabama OL to be a really high draft pick.		
7.	**Brandon Thomas**	Sr.	Clemson
	Every star QB (Tajh Boyd) should have an all-league LT like Thomas.		
8.	**Ja'Wuan James**	Sr.	Tennessee
	Easy to misspell his first name, not so easy to get past him to the QB.		

PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

ASU's NFL-ready defensive tackle back, and better, for 2013

WILL SUTTON

Photo by Cary Edmondson-USA TODAY Sports

Will Sutton was such a force on Arizona State's defensive line last season that one Pac-12 coach wished aloud that Sutton's next game should be on a Sunday. Sutton finished as the Pac-12 Pat Tillman Defensive Player of the Year and a consensus All-American. In short, he was good, really good.

Still, the NFL will have to wait a year.

Sutton announced in January that he planned to return for his senior season. But don't expect him to be the same player he was last year.

"He's better now than he was in the fall," ASU second-year coach Todd Graham said after the spring game, "and that's exciting."

And for the rest of the Pac-12, it has to be somewhat frightening.

Sutton had been solid for most of his career, but last season he was a breakout star. With ASU moving him around to take advantage of mismatches, Sutton posted 23.5 tackles for loss and 13 sacks despite missing most of two games with a knee injury. His per-game averages in those categories ranked in the top three nationally, impressive for a defensive tackle.

Sutton, however, says he can't help but think about the quarterbacks he missed.

"Last year, I probably missed eight (sacks)," he said. "If I don't miss eight, I probably walk away with 20-something."

This season, Graham's expectations of Sutton don't stop with performance; he wants to see leadership. His philosophy: The better the player, the higher the standard.

Sutton has never been hard to find. On Game Day, he's among the first out of the Tillman Tunnel at Sun Devil Stadium, pumping his arms to get fans involved. But at practice and in the weight room, he's not the rah-rah type, one demanding more from teammates or setting the tone. He'd rather just make a play and let his teammates feed off it.

"They want me to be a little more vocal, but it's hard to change somebody with a flip of a coin," Sutton said. "But I'm working on it, trying to see how it is. It's a little uncomfortable."

The son of former NFL defensive back Mickey Sutton, Will has tried to avoid the spotlight. Although polite, he doesn't enjoy media interviews or the attention that comes with being the big man on campus. When going out with friends, they often tell him, "Man, you better tell people who you are."

Sutton's response: "Nah, I'm good."

But word is spreading.

"Yeah, I can't go anywhere," Sutton said. "I go out to Red Robin and the waitresses are asking me for a picture and stuff. It's cool. I ain't going to lie. I just wanted a bite to eat, but I take it all in. It comes with the territory. I just got to stay humble, that's the main thing."

The 6-1 Sutton has work to do physically. Last year, he played most of the season at about 285 pounds. ASU director of strength and conditioning Shawn Griswold would like another 10. Last season, Sutton bench-pressed 225 pounds 20 times. Although ASU doesn't really train to max out on the bench press, Griswold is looking for another eight reps from the defensive tackle.

It's all part of making Sutton better, putting him in position to trump his junior season, which was among the best in school history. Graham already has seen progress.

Near the end of spring practice, he gave Sutton a camouflaged PT42 jersey, an honor Graham created in recognition of Tillman, who played at ASU from 1994 to 1997. Those who excel in all areas, on and off the field, get to wear the jersey in practice.

"He's been bringing it every day," Graham said at the time. "He's coaching other guys. He's telling (them), 'This is not acceptable.' He didn't do that last year. He was a great player, but he didn't do all those things."

Sutton says he'll do whatever's needed.

"The bar is set a lot higher than it was last year," he said. "That's not just for me, but for everybody. It just happens that mine has to be higher than everybody else's.

"I accept the challenge. I'm not scared."

— Doug Haller

TOP DEFENSIVE ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Jadeveon Clowney**	Jr.	South Carolina
	And with the first pick of the 2014 NFL Draft ...		
2.	**Stephon Tuitt**	Jr.	Notre Dame
	A 300-plus pound end in a 3-4 scheme; he had 12 sacks last season.		
3.	**Jackson Jeffcoat**	Sr.	Texas
	Limited to six games in '12 (pec); Jim's boy had 21 TFLs as a sophomore.		
4.	**Devonte Fields**	So.	TCU
	Was Big 12 Defensive Freshman of the Year after 18.5 TFLs, 10 sacks.		
5.	**James Gayle**	Sr.	Virginia Tech
	A known quantity (two-time second-team All-ACC) who had big spring.		
6.	**Scott Crichton**	Jr.	Oregon State
	One of two sophomores to make first-team All-Pac-12 defense in '12.		
7.	**Henry Anderson**	Jr.	Stanford
	Made plays in big games (2.5 TFL vs. Oregon); was a beast late in season.		
8.	**Ed Stinson**	Sr.	Alabama
	He's now the old guy and up-front leader for Alabama's elite D.		
9.	**Deion Barnes**	So.	Penn State
	The Big Ten's freak of freaks; could be next great defender at Penn State.		
10.	**Ben Gardner**	Sr.	Stanford
	Gardner and Henry Anderson — 27 tackles for loss last season.		
11.	**Demarcus Lawrence**	Jr.	Boise State
	A big hit his first year out of JC (13 TFLs, 9.5 sacks) despite two suspensions.		
12.	**Dante Fowler**	So.	Florida
	Rising star is leaner, freakier. Check in '14 to see him near top of this list.		
13.	**Jeremiah Attaochu**	Sr.	Georgia Tech
	In the mold of a classic edge rusher, moving from OLB to end in 2013.		
14.	**Kareem Martin**	Sr.	North Carolina
	His 15.5 tackles for loss helped him earn second-team All-ACC honors.		

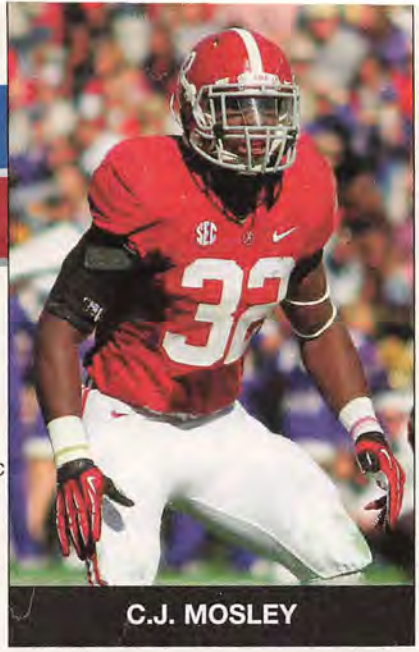
TOP DEFENSIVE TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Will Sutton**	Sr.	Arizona State
	Dominates with inside quickness, and he'll be stronger this season, too.		
2.	**Louis Nix**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Space-eating anchor helped ND stuff the run ... until Alabama.		
3.	**Anthony Johnson**	Jr.	LSU
	Had 10 TFLs, mostly as backup. At LSU, great keeps replacing great.		
4.	**Aaron Donald**	Sr.	Pittsburgh
	He'll go from All-Big East to All-ACC; 34.5 TFLs in past two years.		
5.	**Calvin Barnett**	Sr.	Oklahoma State
	Back to be Big 12's top interior DL; just stay away from those penalties.		
6.	**Dominique Easley**	Sr.	Florida
	Moving to the interior this season after leading Gators in sacks.		
7.	**Timmy Jernigan**	Jr.	Florida State
	Earned second-team All-ACC honors while a backup on FSU's great DL.		
8.	**Beau Allen**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	At 335 pounds, he was made to play the nose in Badgers's new 3-4.		
9.	**Roosevelt Nix**	Sr.	Kent State
	Nix will be trying to make it 4-for-4 on first-team All-MAC selections.		
10.	**Kerry Hyder**	Sr.	Texas Tech
	Earned second-team All-Big 12 mention (14 TFLs, 5.5 sacks).		

PLAYER RATINGS

LINEBACKERS

Shoulder surgery fails to slow down Tide's leading tackler



C.J. MOSLEY

Photo by Michael Wade

A few days after he led Alabama's defense in a rout of Notre Dame in the BCS national championship game, C.J. Mosley landed on a surgeon's table. He'd played through some nagging pain in his right shoulder — the one he used on a number of his team-best 107 tackles — and it needed to be fixed.

The shoulder wasn't fully healed by the start of spring practice, nor was it by the time the Crimson Tide played its spring game. But the shoulder did little to hold back the athletic inside linebacker from both an on-field and off-the-field perspective.

The black, non-contact jersey Mosley wore didn't stop him from intercepting a pass in Alabama's first scrimmage or leading all defenders with nine tackles during the A-Day Game. And it certainly mattered little when it pertained to the enhanced leadership role Mosley has embraced heading into a senior year many thought would never happen.

"When you look at a guy that's done everything he's done so far and knows the defense like he knows it right now," junior safety Vinnie Sunseri said, "you've got to understand that he's the guy you look to during the game, that he's going to let us know that we're going to come through and persevere, and we're going to do certain things.

"I'm just excited to see him back in action."

Without much ceremony, Mosley announced in December that he would return for his senior season at Alabama. Though some projected the Butkus Award finalist to be a first-round talent, Mosley said he wasn't leaving Alabama until he had his degree.

It was that simple.

"I just felt like I haven't accomplished everything that I could as far as playing football," Mosley said. "I just wanted to make sure that when I leave school I don't have any regrets."

With Nico Johnson gone to the NFL, Mosley's on-field role promises to expand. Though he was far and away the team's leader in tackles, Mosley wasn't an every-down player. He started just nine games and primarily picked up his tackles out of Alabama's nickel and dime defenses. Granted, Alabama plays a lot of nickel and dime, but, more often than not, Mosley was on the sidelines when the Crimson Tide played out of its base.

Mosley often joked throughout the season that he was hoping to pick up some snaps out of the base defense. Now, he's serious about it.

"When you have to step up, you have to step up," Mosley said. "Now, I have to fill his shoes and fill some of the shoes of the other players, and do what I have to do to help this team and the defense."

As good as he is on the field, Mosley might help Alabama more by what he does away from it.

Soft-spoken, Mosley is admittedly a "lead by example" kind of player. As a junior, he was a prominent member of Alabama's leadership group, but he left the shouting and rally cries to players like Johnson and defensive end Damion Square.

But when four Crimson Tide players were arrested and kicked off the team in February for their roles in multiple incidents of second-degree robbery and credit card fraud, it was Mosley's time to send a message to his teammates. He admittedly didn't say much because "the incident spoke for itself," but the younger players needed to hear something.

When it came from someone like Mosley, it meant a lot. It was exactly what quarterback AJ McCarron, who has known Mosley since he was in high school, had been waiting to see.

"Him, coming out of his shell, I guess you could say, becoming more of a vocal leader for the defense, has been huge," McCarron said. "It's going to be huge toward our success as the season goes on, so we're going to need him to keep growing as a leader and keep pushing those guys.

"He doesn't take it easy, but he does it in a different way, as in teaching them how to do the right things. I think sometimes he has to keep pushing them, but he's done a great job so far."

— Andrew Gribble

TOP INSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**C.J. Mosley**	Sr.	Alabama
	Was the MVP for the national champship team; can't beat that.		
2.	**Shayne Skov**	Sr.	Stanford
	If we use 'heart and soul' once in the magazine, let us use it here.		
3.	**A.J. Johnson**	So.	Tennessee
	Wants more big plays, but his SEC-best 138 tackles made an impact.		
4.	**Chris Borland**	Jr.	Wisconsin
	First-team All-Big Ten player with 247 tackles in the past two seasons.		
5.	**Max Bullough**	Sr.	Michigan State
	Never gets cheated by a lack of effort; made 111 stops last year.		
6.	**Yawin Smallwood**	Jr.	UConn
	His All-Big East season included 15 tackles for loss.		
7.	**Eric Kendricks**	Jr.	UCLA
	Looking more like brother Mychal, 2011 league def. POY (now with Eagles).		
8.	**Greg Blair**	Sr.	Cincinnati
	First-team All-Big East for a defense that allowed only 17.2 ppg.		
9.	**Bryce Hager**	Jr.	Baylor
	Part of the hope for an improved Bears D after leading Big 12 in tackles.		
10.	**Jack Tyler**	Sr.	Virginia Tech
	Defensive cornerstone for Hokies, leading team with 119 tackles in 2012.		
11.	**Andrew Jackson**	Sr.	Western Kentucky
	Big, strong run-stuffer who is being watched carefully by the pros.		
12.	**James Morris**	Jr.	Iowa
	Part of a senior crew of linebackers that leads Hawkeyes.		

TOP OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Anthony Barr**	Sr.	UCLA
	That Jim Mora is pretty smart, moving Barr from RB in spring 2012.		
2.	**Kyle Van Noy**	Sr.	BYU
	Bowl performance vs. SDSU, including two TDs, was absolutely epic.		
3.	**Ryan Shazier**	Jr.	Ohio State
	Leading candidate for Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year.		
4.	**Trent Murphy**	Sr.	Stanford
	Stanford led country with 124 tackles for loss. He had 18 of them.		
5.	**Prince Shembo**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Gives ND a play-making pass rusher, standing up or as down lineman.		
6.	**Denzel Nkemdiche**	So.	Ole Miss
	So dang quick, makes plays everywhere. Younger bro can play, too, right?		
7.	**Adrian Hubbard**	Jr.	Alabama
	He's the guy who Alabama will turn loose to get after the QB.		
8.	**Morgan Breslin**	Sr.	USC
	He's an OLB (not DE) in USC's new front. Had 14.5 sacks last season.		
9.	**Denzel Perryman**	Jr.	Miami
	Added about 20 pounds and is ready for healthy, breakout season.		
10.	**Christian Jones**	Sr.	Florida State
	Was leading tackler (95) for elite FSU D, which will attack more this year.		
11.	**Shaq Thompson**	So.	Washington
	Still dabbling in pro baseball, but future is as a rangy, ballhawk.		
12.	**Carl Bradford**	Jr.	Arizona State
	Came up 20.5 tackles for loss as the attacking 'Devilbacker.'		

PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Roby's ready for Heisman, but is it ready for him?

It wasn't until six years ago that a sophomore won a Heisman (Tim Tebow, 2007). We were almost desensitized when a freshman won it (Johnny Manziel).

So, why *can't* a defensive player win the Heisman?

"I believe I can win it," said Ohio State All-Big Ten cornerback Bradley Roby.

Deep in their hearts, so do a lot of defensive players these days.

Whatever, they're all chasing Michigan cornerback Charles Woodson, who helped his 1997 candidacy by returning punts and catching a few passes.

BRADLEY ROBY

Photo by Chris Bernacchi/SportPics

This year, South Carolina defensive end Jadeveon Clowney goes in as a preseason favorite. Why not Roby?

Well, let the junior explain it. The kid can talk.

"Last year was a trailer," he said of Ohio State's 2012 undefeated bowl-banned season. "It was a sneak preview."

He can also play. Roby is coming off a season in which he led the nation in passes defended (19) playing for the 12-0 Bucks. He also earned first-team All-Big Ten honors. One problem. If there is a designated Heisman candidate for the Buckeyes, it has to be quarterback Braxton Miller.

OK, so that's one *big* problem.

"I feel like the Heisman is the best player on the best team," Roby said. "If we all did good, they'd give it (to) Braxton before they'd give it to me. ... That's how those awards are. That's why I want to go after the defensive ones."

That would be the Thorpe Award, given to the nation's best defensive back. The only Big Ten player to win the Thorpe since 2000 was Ohio State's Malcolm Jenkins in 2008.

"Corner is probably the second-hardest position to play," Roby said. "It's the only position on the field where everybody sees your mistakes. This year I'm focusing on the picks. I want the picks. I want the ball. I want to change the game all the way around."

Somewhere Deion is smiling.

Roby, from Suwanee, Ga., has that live-for-the-next play mentality, perfect for a corner. In the football facility, his name is atop a board of the fastest Buckeyes in the 40-yard dash (4.26 seconds). Still, he spent part of the offseason in Urban Meyer's leadership class that included Miller, the Big Ten Offensive Player of the Year.

"I took football very selfish my first couple of years," Roby said. "I was worried about myself."

Now? Roby refers to last year's Sept. 29 game at Michigan State. Before Meyer's first Big Ten road game with Ohio State, the coach stopped the pregame meal to propose a toast — a toast where Meyer asked players to "rip your chest open. Hand us your heart. Let us coach you."

"I ain't going to lie," Roby said. "First I'm like, 'What is this dude talking about? I just want to eat, go back to the hotel, chill out.'

"But it was a serious conversation. 'If you're all in and really believe in what we're saying, toast with me.'"

Ohio State won a brutal, grinder of a one-point decision in East Lansing that day. A culture may have been born. It certainly has been memorialized. Meyer has saluted that 2012 team at every turn within the football complex. Banners, posters, team photos. Yes, even rings.

"I feel like we do deserve a ring," Roby said. "We won every game. What are you supposed to do?"

Ohio State feels like champs, and so does Roby. The Heisman talk is a byproduct of that. But he's going to have to look a lot like Woodson to get some Heisman love.

"Coaches have to be in a place where they're comfortable putting you on the other side of the ball (offense)," Roby said.

"Clowney's a good player, but they're not going to give the Heisman to a D-end," he added. "You always run away from a defensive end. You always throw to a different side for a corner. As a quarterback, you're always the center of attention. You're always able to produce."

That doesn't mean Roby can't win the Heisman. Ask him.

— Dennis Dodd

TOP CORNERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Bradley Roby**	Jr.	Ohio State
	His punt return TD last year just something else for him to talk about.		
2.	**Jason Verrett**	Sr.	TCU
	Returning All-American with big-play skills we expect from Frogs' D.		
3.	**Lamarcus Joyner**	Sr.	Florida State
	Move to corner went well this spring for 2012 All-ACC safety.		
4.	**Aaron Colvin**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	Nearly joined a pair of secondary mates in jumping early to the NFL.		
5.	**Louicheiz Purifoy**	Jr.	Florida
	Electric athlete will have a package of plays on offense, too.		
6.	**Ifo Ekpre-Olomu**	Jr.	Oregon
	Fearless corner who forced six fumbles last season.		
7.	**Darqueze Dennard**	Sr.	Michigan State
	Third-year starter will be going for back-to-back All-Big Ten honors.		
8.	**Damian Swann**	Jr.	Georgia
	Top cover man forced two turnovers in Dawgs' win over Florida.		
9.	**E.J. Gaines**	Sr.	Missouri
	Was All-Big-12 in 2011. More impressive: Being All-SEC in 2013.		
10.	**Ross Cockrell**	Sr.	Duke
	Received most points among CBs in voting for all-league team last year.		
11.	**Bene Benwikere**	Sr.	San Jose State
	Huge playmaker in second half of season; ended with 7 INT, 7.5 TFLs.		
12.	**Charles Sawyer**	Sr.	Ole Miss
	Tough enough to play as undersized safety; fluid at cornerback.		

TOP SAFETIES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Ed Reynolds**	Sr.	Stanford
	Was third-team AP All-American last season; six interceptions.		
2.	**Ty Zimmerman**	Jr.	Kansas State
	Knows his way around Big 12; fourth-year starter and all-league member.		
3.	**Craig Loston**	Sr.	LSU
	Not every LSU junior turned pro. Loston began to hit potential in 2012.		
4.	**Ha Ha Clinton-Dix**	Jr.	Alabama
	Picked off team-high five passes last season, including one vs. Irish.		
5.	**Hakeem Smith**	Sr.	Louisville
	Been on three All-Big East teams; watch for Cards S Calvin Pryor, too.		
6.	**Dion Bailey**	Jr.	USC
	Might be a S, not an OLB, in new scheme; production will be there.		
7.	**Alden Darby**	Sr.	Arizona State
	He and CB Osahon Irabor lead pass defense that was third in nation.		
8.	**Ibraheim Campbell**	Jr.	Northwestern
	Third-year starter and a leader for the rising Wildcats.		
9.	**Deone Bucannon**	Sr.	Washington State
	One of the most experienced defenders in Pac-12: 270 tackles.		
10.	**Nickoe Whitley**	Sr.	Mississippi State
	Excellent in coming up to play the run from his free safety spot.		
11.	**Kenny Ladler**	Sr.	Vanderbilt
	Ladler and Vandy CB Andre Hal rate as one of best DB combos in SEC.		
12.	**Derron Smith**	Jr.	Fresno State
	Free safety was all-league in secondary that featured Philip Thomas.		

PLAYER RATINGS

ALL PURPOSE

Terps' plan: Give Diggs ball and 'watch him go'

Take your pick of highlights from Stefon Diggs.

There was the spectacular diving, one-handed catch against Florida State, the tiptoe down the sideline for a huge gain against Wake Forest, and the Superman-like leap into the end zone vs. West Virginia.

TOP KICKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Cairo Santos**	Sr.	Tulane
	Accurate (21 of 21 on FGs) with range (57 yards). What else is there?		
2.	**Chris Boswell**	Sr.	Rice
	Nobody in the country can match this: He was 6 of 8 from 50-plus.		
3.	**Chandler Catanzaro**	Sr.	Clemson
	Made 18 of 19 FGs, including 37-yard dagger to beat LSU.		
4.	**Jeff Budzien**	Sr.	Northwestern
	His only miss in 20 field goal attempts was from 53 yards.		
5.	**Brendan Gibbons**	Sr.	Michigan
	Went 16 of 18, beat rival Michigan State from 38 yards in final seconds.		
6.	**Michael Hunnicutt**	Jr.	Oklahoma
	Gives Bob Stoops a peaceful feeling: is 38 of 45 in first two years.		
7.	**Ross Martin**	So.	Duke
	Promising start: 18 of 20 and did not miss in six tries beyond 40.		
8.	**Carey Spear**	Sr.	Vanderbilt
	Hit school-record 20 FGs; bonus points for big hits on kick coverage.		

TOP PUNTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Kyle Christy**	Jr.	Florida
	He helped Gators' stingy D with school-record average 45.7 yards.		
2.	**Richie Leone**	Sr.	Houston
	A third of his 60 punts went for 50-plus yards.		
3.	**Will Monday**	Fr.	Duke
	He was the All-ACC punter as a rookie, averaging 44.6 yards.		
4.	**Kirby Van Der Kamp**	Sr.	Iowa State
	Was one of 10 semifinalists last season for Ray Guy Award.		
5.	**Ethan Perry**	So.	TCU
	TCU is set with Perry and fellow sophomore at PK, Jaden Oberkrom.		
6.	**Mike Sadler**	Jr.	Michigan State
	The 2012 All-Big Ten punter; one of the best at placement.		
7.	**Darragh O'Neill**	Jr.	Colorado
	Well, he did get a lot of practice; 76 attempts among most in nation.		
8.	**Cody Mandell**	Sr.	Alabama
	Because on top of everything else, Bama needs 44.3-yard punting average.		

TOP ALL PURPOSE

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**De'Anthony Thomas**	Jr.	Oregon
	He could win the Heisman. If he gets enough touches, watch out.		
2.	**Stefon Diggs**	So.	Maryland
	Did somebody say "touches?" Get this guy the ball.		
3.	**Tyler Lockett**	Jr.	Kansas State
	Has four kick return TDs in two years, plus impact in passing game.		
4.	**Justin Gilbert**	Sr.	Oklahoma State
	Experienced corner with five career kick return touchdowns.		
5.	**Antonio Andrews**	Sr.	Western Kentucky
	Yeah, he's on our RB list, too, but this is where he excels (3,161 AP yards).		
6.	**Marcus Murphy**	Jr.	Missouri
	Scored four times on returns, could be Tigers' No. 1 tailback.		
7.	**Trey Watts**	Sr.	Tulsa
	Had 1,108 yards rushing, and one score each on a punt and kick return.		
8.	**Brendan Bigelow**	Jr.	Cal
	Taking a flyer on a flyer: Sonny Dykes just has to figure out how to use him.		

STEFON DIGGS

Photo by AP Photo/Tomasso Derosa

The Maryland wide receiver looked like an Olympic sprinter as he left the coverage unit in the dust on a 100-yard kickoff return against Virginia. He used every bit of his 32-inch vertical leap to climb the ladder and snare a high pass against Wake Forest.

There were countless times last season when the fabulous true freshman made defenders look silly with his vast array of moves. The 6-1, 185-pound speedster can change directions without slowing down. He has the fast hips and wiggle that leave would-be tacklers grasping for air.

"Stefon is a special, special player. He's just a flat-out playmaker. Get him the ball and watch him go," said Maryland tailback Wes Brown, also a teammate of Diggs at Good Counsel High in Olney, Md.

Maryland would like to find even more ways to put the ball in the hands of Diggs after seeing what he did in 2012. Despite playing with a nonstop rotation of young, inexperienced quarterbacks due to an incredible string of injuries, Diggs led Maryland in receptions (54), receiving yards (848) and touchdown catches (six). He helped define the term "yards after catch" by repeatedly turning short completions into long gains.

"I anticipated Stefon being productive and doing some of the things we've seen him do, but maybe didn't realize how much further along he was in terms of development," Maryland coach Randy Edsall said midway through last season.

"Stefon has incredible instincts along with a tremendous understanding and knowledge of the game."

Diggs was named a Freshman All-American by the Football Writers Association of America after ranking second in the Atlantic Coast Conference with 172.4 all-purpose yards per game. He was selected second team All-ACC and chosen the team's Most Valuable Player by a vote of coaches.

Diggs amassed 1,896 all-purpose yards last season, which ranks second all-time at Maryland behind current Baltimore Ravens standout Torrey Smith (2,192 in 2009). Diggs put on a show against North Carolina, racking up 248 all-purpose yards, including a 99-yard kickoff return for a touchdown.

Diggs was one of 10 players selected to Maryland's "leadership council" during spring camp, and Edsall sees the youngster growing up and taking a more mature approach to preparation. At one point last season, Edsall criticized Diggs for being too emotional after he drew an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for throwing the football at a Georgia Tech defender.

Diggs made strides in that area this spring.

"He's more focused; not to say that he wasn't before," Edsall said. "He doesn't want to stay the same; he doesn't want to regress. He really understands the effort that has to go into being a good player."

Diggs, a five-star prospect and consensus high school All-American, was easily the most high-profile recruit to sign with Maryland in more than a decade. That Diggs chose the Terrapins over such national powerhouses as Auburn, Florida and Ohio State represented a major coup for Edsall and his developing program.

And Diggs more than lived up to the hype as a rookie, displaying the skill set that has many believing he'll leave for the NFL after just three years in College Park. Diggs, whose hands are so big they don't look like they belong with his body (he wears size 3X gloves), averaged 28.5 yards per kickoff return and 10.0 yards per punt return.

Maryland wide receivers coach Lee Hull said the offensive staff must continue to be creative in coming up with new ways to get Diggs the ball.

"He is so difficult to contain," Hull said. "Put Stefon one-on-one with any defender, that's a definite mismatch and we feel good about the potential results."

— Bill Wagner

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ECFA MEMBER

UNIT RANKINGS

TOP10 BACKFIELD

1. GEORGIA

If you wanted to argue Texas A&M or Alabama for this spot, we wouldn't disagree. It's close. Really close. Take your pick. But even though the Tide won the national title, and the Aggies won the Heisman, when we stack these up, we've got to give this to the Dawgs.

Georgia has a national top five quarterback in senior Aaron Murray, who came one play away from beating Alabama in the SEC title game. The Bulldogs haven't won the biggest of big games under Murray, but they know they can.

But what really makes the Dawgs special here is "Gurshall." Running back Todd Gurley is, well, manly, setting a school record with 17 rushing touchdowns as a freshman, breaking the mark held by some old-timer named Herschel. Gurley ran for 1,385 yards, while his freshman running mate, Keith Marshall, went for 759 yards and eight scores.

Yup, a pair of freshmen combining for 2,134 yards rushing, and one of the elite quarterbacks — Heisman, national title could both come Georgia's way in 2013, led by this talented group.

2. TEXAS A&M

The hunch is that defenses will have schemed for nine months to get ready for QB Johnny Manziel's running, improvisational or not, but the Aggies have eight other legs that can hurt opponents. Starter Ben Malena (5.9 yards per carry last season) is back, as is speedy Trey Williams (some thunder and lightning there). And here's another set just like it: Oklahoma transfer Brandon Williams and Oregon transfer Tra Carson.

3. ALABAMA

If Georgia's Gurley wasn't the best freshman runner in the country last season, then Alabama's T.J. Yeldon was. With those two proving it's possible to rush for 1,000 yards as a freshman in the rugged SEC, here comes five-star recruit Derrick Henry. Nick Saban likes to use two backs (preferably some thunder here, and lightning there), and Henry is the former. There won't be a shortage of candidates, with Kenyan Drake and Jalston Fowler, among others, able to provide adequate company in the backfield with steely cool QB AJ McCarron.

4. OREGON

Quarterback Marcus Mariota and running back De'Anthony Thomas are electrifying, with Mariota also one of the most accurate passers in the country. Thomas has hardly been overused in the last two seasons, so if new coach Mark Helfrich decides to really take off the wraps (he was the offensive coordinator, so he knows what he's got), Thomas's numbers could be staggering. Oregon also has a number of other highly-touted running backs, led by sophomore Byron Marshall and incoming freshman Thomas Tyner.

Todd Gurley

Photo by AP Photos

5. OHIO STATE

The Buckeyes flaunted their mobile quarterback and tailback depth in the spring, messing around with a diamond formation featuring Braxton Miller in the shotgun, surrounded by a trio of backs. It's a little something Urban Meyer wanted to try after seeing the San Francisco 49ers do it. But the Bucks don't have to be tricky. When you're good, you're good ... and Miller and running back Carlos Hyde are great.

6. MIAMI

Now, this is beginning to look more like the good ol' days of Miami. Stephen Morris could stand to be more accurate, but he threw for 3,345 yards and didn't cause much anxiety among the faithful. Running back Duke Johnson quickly added up to 947 yards by gaining 6.8 a carry ... and he gobbled up the turf on kick returns for two scores.

7. STANFORD

Stanford began last season with a quarterback question, but ended with the answer being Kevin Hogan. He took over late and led the Cardinal to wins at Oregon and UCLA, and then the Pac-12 title game and Rose Bowl. Oh, is that all? Hogan, a sophomore, has a wealth of help in the backfield with the return of Tyler Gaffney, who sat out last year while playing pro baseball, and redshirt freshman Barry Sanders Jr.

8. LSU

The Tigers don't stop coming at tailback, led by sophomore Jeremy Hill, who averaged nearly 100 yards over the last seven games of his freshman season. Alfred Blue and Kenny Hilliard will help out plenty, while Zach Mettenberger hopes to capture every week the feeling he had when he threw for nearly 300 yards vs. Alabama.

9. NEBRASKA

Senior quarterback Taylor Martinez has rushed for 2,858 yards in his career and passed for 6,591, but the Huskers have been stuck on four-loss records for the past three years. To take the next step in the Big Ten, they will be relying on Martinez to close out strong with Ameer Abdullah, who rushed for 1,137 yards last season.

10. TEXAS

It's David Ash's team now, with no more doubts. Rallying to beat Oregon State in the Alamo Bowl might be the kick-start the Longhorns have needed for a few years now. Johnathan Gray, Malcolm Brown and Joe Bergeron lets UT go deep in the backfield.

TOP10 RECEIVERS

1. ALABAMA

Sophomore Amari Cooper isn't as strong as Julio Jones, but he has better hands and runs better routes ... and the Tide might have more wideouts just like him. Speedy freshman Chris Black had a similar buzz as Cooper last year before an injured shoulder wiped out his season. But he's rarin' to go, along with Kenny Bell (who is back after suffering a broken leg in the Iron Bowl), Kevin Norwood, DeAndew White and Christion Jones. An Alabama quarterback has never had it so good.

2. LOUISVILLE

It's not just what they have coming back, it's what they add. These two are a good place to start: DeVante Parker is the tall guy on the outside who makes big plays (18.6 yards per catch) and scores touchdowns (10), while Damian Copeland is a speed guy who had 50 catches. Beyond that, Teddy Bridgewater's options overflow with Michaelee Harris (returning from a knee injury) and a pair of SEC transfers — 6-5 Matt Milton (Tennessee) and Robert Clark (Florida).

3. OKLAHOMA STATE

Looking for the next Wes Welker? He's in Stillwater. Whichever Pokes quarterback wins the starting job will have a security blanket and best pal in 5-10, 185-pound junior Josh Stewart, who was a 101-catch guy in 2012. On the outside, the Moore seniors — Tracy and Charlie (no relation) — are dynamic and

explosive. But what else would you expect from what annually is one of the deepest receiving corps in the country?

4. USC

There's Marqise Lee and USC's usual assortment of highly-touted players waiting in the wings to emerge — but emerge they need to do. It won't be George Farmer, who tore up a knee in spring, but it will be sophomore Nelson Agholor. Tight end Xavier Grimble can be big-time pass-catcher, and he should be fine for the season after he recovers from the worst-sounding injury of the spring — a fractured chest.

5. WASHINGTON

The Huskies have two potential All-Americans in junior receiver Kasen Williams and junior tight end Austin Seferian-Jenkins. Williams had 77 receptions last season and needs only to show more explosiveness to emerge as truly elite. Seferian-Jenkins had 69 receptions, a tight-end record for a school that has sent plenty of those to the NFL.

6. LSU

The talent is there if the Tigers want to use it. Sophomore Odell Beckham Jr. and junior Jarvis Landry combined for 97 catches last season, which sounds modest by modern college football standards, but that's about all any tandem can get in Les Miles' run-flavored attack.

7. OKLAHOMA

The Sooners aren't letting Bedlam rival Oklahoma State run away with the wide receiver derby. Even with Kenny Stills and Justin Brown gone, they're reloading with Trey Metoyer, Durron Neal, Jalen Saunders and several others who — dang that timing — would've made terrific targets for Landry Jones.

8. OHIO STATE

Just close your eyes and think about how Urban Meyer used Percy Harvin at Florida. When Jordan Hall — playing the "pivot" position — flares into space to catch passes a la Harvin, it'll diversify a Buckeyes offense that already will have experienced starting wideouts in Corey Brown and Devin Smith, as well as several strong recruits brought in by Meyer the past two years. If Smith catches the ball consistently, his upside is over the top.

9. SAN JOSE STATE

We'll let the numbers speak for themselves. San Jose State's quartet of Noel Grigsby, Chandler Jones, Jabari Carr and Kyle Nunn have a combined 555 receptions for 6,494 yards and 41 touchdowns ... and counting.

10. BAYLOR

If you didn't quite see Kendall Wright coming, and you didn't quite see Terrance Williams coming, then you probably don't see Tevin Reese coming. Defensive backs will see a lot of the blazing-fast Reese *going* in 2013.

TOP10 OFFENSIVE LINE

1. STANFORD

The constant during the Cardinal's emergence as a national power: The offensive line. And this edition just might be the best one yet. The highlight player is senior David Yankey, moving from left tackle to his better position of left guard to make room for a member of the team's ridiculously talented offensive line class of 2012.

2. TENNESSEE

It only seemed as if the Vols were doing everything wrong for the past few years. Other coaches recruited and developed this line, handing it over, fully mature, to new coach Butch Jones. The tackle tandem of Tiny Richardson and Ja'Wuan James is top notch, and two other returning starters on the line could be future pros, too.

3. OKLAHOMA

In 2012, Gabe Ikard, Adam Shead, Bronson Irwin and company blocked for statuesque (as in: couldn't move) Landry Jones. This season, they'll have to adjust to a quarterback — likely Blake Bell — who'll be more mobile and, likely, far less patient in the pocket. Even with a lot of injuries over the past couple of years, including this past spring, the Sooners' wall up front is the heart of the offense.

Amari Cooper

Photo by RD Moore

4. ALABAMA

The Tide offensive line produced the 10th and 11th pick in the draft, and neither of those was Barrett Jones, whose leadership and versatility was vital to Alabama's torrent of success. Given that, it's impossible to say the Tide will be as good up front, but if this area is the team's biggest question mark, then every team should have such problems. Left tackle Cyrus Kouandjio and guard Anthony Steen are two future high draft picks.

5. OHIO STATE

Urban Meyer didn't build this wall, but that's OK — four senior returning starters will continue to make him look good. The left side of the line is particularly strong, with guard Andrew Norwell solid as oak and versatile Jack Mewhort steady enough to let quarterback Braxton Miller do his play-extending thing.

6. FLORIDA

A pair of transfers — Tyler Moore from Nebraska and Max Garcia from Maryland — staked their claims to starting jobs in the spring when injuries stretched the Gators too thin. The newbies, combined with three returning starters and others returning to health, give Florida the upgrade it needs to go a little further this season.

7. FLORIDA STATE

The Seminoles have four returning starters, only one of whom is a senior, that being all-star center Bryan Stork. Jimbo Fisher is removing the last traces of softness from the Florida State line, evidenced by the team's increasing rushing totals.

8. OREGON

The Ducks might not send a ton of offensive linemen to the NFL every year, but they don't gain all those yards without some players getting it done up front. This shapes up as another fine line, led by returning first-team all-conference center Hroniss Grasu. Tackle Jake Fisher should be a breakout player. And as always, one of the strengths of Oregon's line is depth, a necessity to play the up-tempo offense.

9. NEBRASKA

The chaos swirls around star guard Spencer Long — who might be the Big Ten's finest offensive lineman — but it's a good kind of chaos. Junior college newcomers, including Matt Finnin and Chongo Kondolo, have infused serious competition along the Huskers front.

10. OREGON STATE

The Beavers return four starters on a line that is deep and talented. Left tackle Michael Philipp has long had loads of potential, and was playing this spring as if he could reach it. Sophomore center Isaac Seumalo is also a potential all-conference pick.

UNIT RANKINGS

TOP 10 DEFENSIVE LINE

1. NOTRE DAME

The Irish don't get a complete pass for what transpired in last season's BCS title game against Alabama, but they were up against one of the greatest offensive lines of the modern era — in retrospect, it was going to be a mismatch. Winning mismatches are what massive nose tackle Louis Nix and electric end Stephon Tuitt gave the Irish all last season prior to the finale, and those two are back to lead what should be one of the best defenses in the land. And now the chip on their shoulders could make them more revved than ever.

2. STANFORD

They've built themselves some good lines on The Farm, with the Cardinal's defensive front perhaps being as stout as its excellent offensive line, which leads back to why Stanford is preseason No. 3 in the country. Every player off the two-deep of the three-man front that ended the season returns, led by end Henry Anderson. Uh, or led by end Ben Gardner. It's hard to tell. They're both playmakers, and lots of highly-regarded younger players round out the rotation.

3. SOUTH CAROLINA

That Jadeveon Clowney had 13 of the Gamecocks' SEC-best 43 sacks is a matter of record. As for how many unofficial assists he deserved, that's harder to say, although still a very real part of this defensive front. South Carolina works well together because the rest of the guys up front — including end Chaz Sutton (five sacks) and tackle Kelcy Quarles — are pretty nasty in their own right. If opponents cheat too much to account for Clowney, another Gamecock will make the play (and Clowney still might anyway) ... forget about Clowney for a microsecond and, well, that's something Michigan's Vincent Smith can tell you about.

4. TCU

Maybe the Horned Frogs will be outclassed from the jump in the opener against LSU in Arlington, Texas. Or maybe, just maybe, the Tigers will get a load of spectacular sophomore end Devonte Fields, ball-of-fire tackle Chucky Hunter and the rest of TCU's fast, angry D-line and realize they've got a real fight on their hands. Believe this: Fields, who had 18.5 tackles for loss and 10 sacks as a true freshman, could play for LSU or any other SEC team.

5. USC

This is where the Trojans look best and they'll be better coached on this side of the ball with Clancy Pendergast taking over as coordinator and morphing the Trojans into a different look. The base is a 5-2, and, for the sake of this argument, we'll consider outside linebackers Devon Kennard and Morgan Breslin part of the up-front attack dogs. That's a lot of quarterback pressure right there, while "real ends" Leonard Williams and George Uko are future pros.

6. FLORIDA

It would be huge if Ronald Powell comes back from two ACL surgeries as a full pass-rushing force in his hybrid end/outside linebacker role. The Gators had a national top five defense last season but were only eighth in the SEC in sacks. Promising Dante Fowler Jr. also can play the pass-rushing Buck position, with fellow sophomore Jonathan Bullard on the other end. Dominique Easley slides inside to tackle.

7. ALABAMA

The national leaders in rush defense will miss three regulars from its three-man front. There's no getting around that. Familiar faces include returning starter Ed Stinson and opposite end Jeoffrey Pagan. Nose guard Brandon Ivory has seen ample playing time. That they're all good to great goes without saying, right?

8. FLORIDA STATE

It's weird that a team that returns no starters on its four-man front can be listed here, but defensive tackle Timmy Jernigan fit nobody's idea of a "backup" last season, senior tackle Demonte McAllister has all-league kind of ability and sophomore end Mario Edwards Jr. might start living up to the recruiting hype in three ... two ... one ...

Stephon Tuitt

Photo by AP Photos

9. TEXAS TECH

The best thing new coach Kliff Kingsbury has going for him isn't his beloved-alum status or Johnny Manziel's seal of cool-buddy approval — it's one of the most promising units a Red Raiders defense has had in a long time. Four quality starters are back, with 6-2, 281-pound senior Kerry Hyder leading the way.

10. ARIZONA STATE

Senior defensive tackle Will Sutton was the conference's Defensive Player of the Year in 2012, and every other key contributor returns to a unit that will be one of the most disruptive anywhere.

TOP 10 LINEBACKERS

1. ALABAMA

Here is the heart of Alabama's defense. Senior inside 'backer C.J. Mosley was voted the team MVP by his teammates last season, but he is still fueled by what's left to prove, specifically being a guy who never has to leave the field, no matter the defensive package. Junior outside linebacker Adrian Hubbard (seven sacks last season) can become an even more dominant pass rusher. Sophomore Trey DePriest and junior Xzavier Dickson already have shown to be way more than capable on the biggest stage.

2. STANFORD

The Cardinal returns three of four starters, including third-team All-American Trent Murphy, and ball of energy Shayne Skov, who should be back in peak form now that he's further removed from a knee injury. Each turned down the NFL to return for a senior season, Skov making 81 tackles last season and Murphy a team-high 10 sacks. A.J. Tarpley also returns.

3. UCLA

The Bruins' top linebacker tandem might be the best in the in the conference, if not the country, (yes, we see you, Alabama and Stanford) with outside linebacker Anthony Barr — who resisted the strong urging of the NFL to return to school — and inside linebacker Eric Kendricks. A third starter returning is senior Jordan Zumwalt.

4. IOWA

There's one thing the Hawkeyes still are really good at, and this is it. Iowa's senior starters — James Morris inside, flanked by Christian Kirksey and Anthony Hitchens — are of championship caliber, even if most of their teammates are not. The trio was

extremely productive last season (combined 27.7 tackles per game) but needs to spice things up with more big plays if the Hawkeyes are going to amount to anything in the deeply competitive Big Ten Legends Division.

5. OHIO STATE

You have to be willing to take a leap of faith about the Buckeyes' linebacking corps, and we are. Curtis Grant, a former five-star recruit who has yet to make a true impact, is determined to break out as a star in his junior season. He'll be pushed (or complemented) by more recent star recruits who boost the unit's talent level. No leap of faith needed about Ryan Shazier, though. The junior is the Big Ten's most intimidating defender and potentially its most effective.

6. OKLAHOMA STATE

The time has come for seniors Shaun Lewis and Caleb Lavey to crank up their production and lead the Pokes back to their turnover-binging days of 2011. Although the run defense was greatly improved in 2012, there weren't enough stripped balls, tipped balls and interceptions — or sacks — for OSU to hang in the Big 12 hunt. Lewis, in particular, needs to be more of a playmaker.

7. NOTRE DAME

We'll begin to find out just how much a team misses a linebacker who finished second in the Heisman voting. The Irish are set at the outside positions, with pass rusher Prince Shembo and Danny Spond reprising their 2012 roles. Dan Fox and Carlo Calabrese time-share an inside spot. As for replacing Manti Te'o, say hello to junior Jarrett Grace.

8. TENNESSEE

The Vols can't crow about depth, but A.J. Johnson is one of the best in the country. Curt Maggitt is awfully good, and senior Dontavis Sapp was one of the team's most improved players in the spring.

9. BAYLOR

It wasn't just the offense that erupted over the second half of last season; a long-dormant defense began to assert itself, too. Bryce Hager and Eddie Lackey are terrific, and linebacker-safety hybrid Sam Holl was a hard-hitting team leader by the end of the year. Zero chance the Bears fall back toward the bottom of the Big 12 defensive rankings in 2013.

10. USC

We've already cheated and counted outside linebackers Morgan Breslin and Devon Kennard — converted defensive ends in a new scheme — as part of the defensive line group. So, we won't double dip here. But if we're just counting Hayes Pullard and Lamar Dawson as "real" linebackers in the 5-2 scheme, we'll take those two and spot you most of the rest of the country.

Shayne Skov

Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

TOP10 SECONDARY

1. TCU

The divide between wide receivers and cornerbacks in the Big 12 has been absurdly large for a long time, but Horned Frogs senior Jason Verrett will stick any playmaker, anywhere, anytime — he's every bit as important to this defense as end Devonte Fields, who's got a bigger national rep. Sam Carter might be the conference's best safety, too. Indeed, Gary Patterson seems to have the defensive side of his house in order again.

2. OREGON

The Ducks — never slow back here — return four starters, led by cornerback Ifo Ekpre-Olomu, who emerged as an all-conference player in 2012 and a potential All-American. Also back are junior cornerback Terrance Mitchell (yep, that's the top cover duo in the Pac-12), free safety Avery Patterson and rover Brian Jackson. Oregon had a league-high 26 picks in 2013.

3. OHIO STATE

There have been so many great cornerbacks in Columbus through the years — Shawn Springs, Antoine Winfield, Nate Clements, Chris Gamble, Malcolm Jenkins — and junior Bradley Roby fits that mold. He alone gives the Buckeyes a better secondary than most. Of course, he's not alone back there; senior safeties C.J. Barnett and Christian Bryant also return as starters. Urban Meyer has signed some stellar corners in the past couple of years, too. This secondary should be up there with the best ones Meyer had at Florida.

4. LOUISVILLE

The Cardinals have the safeties — perennial all-conference senior Hakeem Smith and junior Calvin Pryor, a playmaker from his free safety spot. The cornerbacks get it done, too, chipping in key plays. You might remember Terell Floyd's "shock the world" pick-six on the first play of the Sugar Bowl victory over Florida.

5. FLORIDA

The Gators have the cornerbacks — enormously talented Loucheiz Purifoy and fellow junior Marcus Roberson, who broke up 12 passes last season. Corner Jaylen Watkins could end holding down one of the safety spots in a get-your-11-best-on-the-field scenario.

6. MICHIGAN STATE

Folks in East Lansing would say the Spartans have the Big Ten's best secondary, and we can appreciate that point of view. Senior Darqueze Dennard has All-American potential at cornerback. Senior Isaiah Lewis has been a mainstay at safety. Coach Mark Dantonio is as high on redshirt freshman safety Demetrious Cox as he's been on any player in a long time. MSU doesn't have Ohio State's back-end depth, but the starting unit could be equally strong.

7. TEXAS

The Longhorns are experienced at every unit on both sides of the ball, but this might be where the ceiling is highest. Safeties Mykkele Thompson and Adrian Phillips, and corners Carrington Byndum, Sheroid Thompson and Quandre Diggs, all have athletic advantages. Now they have to coalesce to become as good as many expected them to be a season ago.

8. ALABAMA

The Tide led the SEC in pass defense last season, and replacements are never far away because of a deep rotation. More lockdown responsibility will fall on cornerback Deion Belue now that Dee Milliner is in the NFL, but the safeties, led by Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, are still top-shelf.

9. NOTRE DAME

Three starters return, with touted sophomore Elijah Shumate replacing Zeke Motta at strong safety in a trade of experience for athleticism. The Irish allowed more than 200 passing yards only four times last season.

10. ARIZONA STATE

The Sun Devils led the conference in pass defense last season, allowing foes to complete just 50.5 percent of their throws. Two starters return from that group — cornerback Osahon Irabor and safety Alden Darby.

Illustration by Tim Williams

ONE MORE GO-ROUND FOR BCS SETS UP AS 8-PEAT FOR SEC

Can Anyone Topple King Saban's Tide?

BY ANTHONY GIMINO

Well, we made it. The end of the BCS. That wasn't so bad, was it?

College football has moved, inch-by-painful inch, toward a playoff, which will be delivered starting next year, the 2014 season. Four teams, selected by a committee involving representatives of each conference.

Yeah, nothing could go wrong there, says the team that finishes fifth.

Anyway, with hope amid this change, we have just one more year of the troubled BCS era, which has featured a two-loss champ and a pair of finalists that didn't even win their own division, not to mention their conference. It was a system in constant need of twisting and tweaking before it finally needed to be flushed.

This experiment began in 1998 in a Bowden/Paterno college football world. It will end in a Saban/Meyer twin pillar of excellence.

Those guys — Nick Saban and Urban Meyer — have combined to win five of the past seven national championships, and we think they'll be the two head coaches on the opposing sidelines when the 16th and final BCS game is played in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on Jan. 6.

Kinda fitting, don't you think?

But the season will end the same way it did in 2009, 2011 and 2012, with Alabama and Saban holding the crystal football, with a faint hint of a smile that is more of an I-told-you-so smirk.

King Saban.

He's sitting on high, moving his five-star recruits along the chessboard with greater precision and superior strategy against everybody else's pawns. And if you bet against him, you're probably better off just lighting the money on fire and enjoying the warm glow.

It's come to this: Saban, the Alabama dynasty, the seven-year run of national championships by the SEC ... that's all bundled into this season's top storyline.

Who is going to beat these guys?

If it's not Alabama from the SEC, then it could very well be Georgia ... or Texas A&M

... or LSU ... or South Carolina ... or Florida.

Yep, it looks like eight in a row.

From the "others" pile, we'll give Meyer and Ohio State at least a puncher's chance. The Buckeyes have the right coach and, quite possibly, the transcendent quarterback (Braxton Miller) who could negate the other advantages of Alabama (or another top SEC team).

We'd love to see a power-on-power battle with never-underestimate-them Stanford trying to brave the Tide. On the other hand, the speed and spread of Oregon could very well be the best antidote to Alabama's defense.

Other than that, let's ask again, who is going to beat Alabama or the SEC?

To do so, you better run the ball and stop the run. As Saban has won four BCS titles, including the one in 2003 at LSU, his teams have yielded less than two yards per rush in the championship game (107 carries, 204 yards). His running attack, meanwhile, hums at a healthy 4.6 yards per attempt (171 for 779) when the biggest prize is at stake.

Alabama should excel in both areas again.

Think about this: When the BCS era ends, Saban could very well have hoarded nearly one-third of the titles.

Yep, the crown fits.

CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT

A moment of silence, please, for the Western Athletic Conference, which has been erased after a half-century on the college football map.

The league sent forth Arizona and Arizona to the Pac-8 in 1978, had an enviable fondness for wide-open football, generated a BYU national championship in 1983, grew to 16 teams in the late 1990s, gave Boise State a place to flourish in the 2000s and produced, among so many others, Jim McMahon, Steve Young, LaDainian Tomlinson, Marshall Faulk, Ty Detmer and Kellen Moore, the winningest quarterback in college football history.

And, now, it's gone.

The realignment virus keeps worming its way down from the top, rendering some conferences unrecognizable, and entirely devouring the WAC.

Take two aspirin and contemplate these changes for 2013 and beyond:

ACC (14 TEAMS)

The league swells to 14 teams with the addition of Pitt (to the Coastal Division) and Syracuse (Atlantic). ACC teams will play six games within their division, and two crossover contests.

In 2014, Notre Dame, while remaining an independent, will begin a five-game partnership to play a rotating schedule of ACC, teams. Also in 2014, Louisville will join the ACC while Maryland departs for the Big Ten, of all places.

BIG EAST (10 TEAMS)

First of all, it's not the Big East. The league has been rebranded as the American Athletic Conference starting right now, and it has expanded well beyond its traditional footprint.

Pitt and Syracuse are gone to the ACC. Central Florida, Houston, Memphis and SMU are new to the American.

2014: Louisville (ACC) and Rutgers (Big Ten) leave the nest; East Carolina, Tulane and Tulsa add, uh, quantity.

2015: Navy begins as a football-only partner, increasing membership to 12 and allowing for a championship game of the league we like to call the AmerAthCon.

BIG TEN (12 TEAMS)

No changes for this season while the B1G awaits the arrival of Maryland and Rutgers in 2014, when it will be time to shuffle the names and composition of the divisions.

The thoroughly unpopular and confusing division names — Legends and Leaders — will be replaced by the slightly less obtuse Mystique and Aura. No, just plain ol' East and West, actually.

BIG 12 (10 TEAMS)

It's the same Large Dozen Minus Two as last season.

CONFERENCE USA (14 TEAMS)

The league bled four teams to the Big East ... uh, the American Athletic Conference ... but raided the Sun Belt and WAC for six replacements, and could be renamed the Directional Schools Conference.

Here are the newbies: Louisiana Tech, Texas-San Antonio, Florida Atlantic, Florida International, North Texas and Middle Tennessee

The rebuilt league will split into divisions:

EAST: East Carolina, Florida Atlantic, Florida International, Marshall, Middle Tennessee, Southern Miss, UAB

WEST: Louisiana Tech, North Texas, Rice, Tulane, Tulsa, UTEP, Texas-San Antonio

East Carolina, Tulane and Tulsa leave after the 2013 season for the American, but Western Kentucky and FBS newcomer Old Dominion will move in for 2014.

MAC (13 TEAMS)

Lucky 13 ... no changes this season. Amen.

MOUNTAIN WEST (12 TEAMS)

The Big East's upheaval forced Boise State and San Diego State from committing geographic blasphemy. The schools decided to do a U-turn, cancel the U-Hauls and keep their roots planted solidly in the Mountain West. A rare victory for common sense.

The conference retained all its members and added two more — San Jose State and Utah State, each coming off surprisingly good seasons in the WAC. So good, unfortunately, that their coaches moved on to even bigger conferences, the Spartans' Mike MacIntyre to Colorado and the Aggies' Gary Andersen to Wisconsin.

There will be two divisions:

MOUNTAIN: Air Force, Boise State, Colorado State, New Mexico, Utah State, Wyoming

WEST: Fresno State, Hawaii, Nevada, San Diego State, San Jose State, UNLV

The league will hold its inaugural conference championship game on Dec. 7, at the home of the division champ with the higher BCS rating.

PAC-12 (12 TEAMS)

No changes for this season, and the immediate future looks quiet, too.

SEC (14 TEAMS)

Standing still as college football's standard of excellence.

SUN BELT (8 TEAMS)

The league temporarily drops from 10 to eight teams, losing four to Conference USA (Florida Atlantic, Florida International, North Texas and Middle Tennessee), and picks up Texas State from the WAC and Georgia State from the Football Championship Subdivision.

In 2014, Appalachian State and Georgia Southern will join the Sun Belt, moving up from the lower division, and Idaho and New Mexico State will become football-only members.

INDEPENDENTS (6 TEAMS)

Idaho and New Mexico State will spend only this season as exiles in the Independent class, and Navy will eventually join the American Athletic Conference two years down the road. That will leave Notre Dame, BYU and Army as the lone Indies by 2015 ... of course, so much can happen before then.

Illustration by Tim Williams

HEISMAN ... WATCH CAREFULLY

The glass ceiling is cracked.

From 2007 to 2009, sophomores won the Heisman Trophy. Then came Auburn's Cam Newton, an out-of-nowhere junior college transfer. And then the Heisman world was dazzled by Robert Griffin III from Baylor. *Baylor!*

And Johnny Manziel topped it all last season by becoming the first freshman to win the Heisman.

When it comes to the Heisman, hardly any of the old voting "rules" apply any more — often making a mockery of preseason predictions — and it's only a matter of time before a pure defensive player takes a hammer to what's left of that glass ceiling. Yeah, we're talking about you, South Carolina defensive end Jadeveon Clowney.

He was sixth in the balloting last season, when Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o finished second. A year earlier, LSU cornerback/returner Tyrann Mathieu was fifth. Nebraska's Ndamukong Suh was fourth in 2009.

So, that's a top five finish for a defensive player in three of the past four seasons. And none of those other guys began the season with the same kind of helmet-popping hype as Clowney. If he makes mincemeat out of the SEC again ...

Here is our preseason Top 10:

1A. JOHNNY MANZIEL, QB, TEXAS A&M:

It's so hard to repeat. Manziel will not only be judged against the rest of the field, but against his own success from last season (3,706 passing yards, 1,410 rushing yards, 47 total touchdowns, one win over Alabama). He's a rock star now, and he not only has to handle the celebrity, but also any potential backlash from voters who think he's getting too much attention. But it's hard to doubt Johnny Football, who went off for more than 500 total yards in a bowl victory over Oklahoma and who was razor sharp in the Aggies' spring game, showing his usual moxie by throwing a big block on a touchdown run. What can't he do? How about, what won't he do?

1B. BRAXTON MILLER, QB, OHIO STATE:

Miller sported a blond mohawk for a while this spring, drawing plenty of attention, but it's his tighter mechanics and improved arm, not his good looks, that could make him a *Sports Illustrated* cover boy for the second time in a year. The junior has the crazy athleticism, the make-something-out-of-nothing skills we've come to expect in a modern-day quarterback ... and he has a team that could, once again, race through the regular season undefeated. If his accuracy improves, as expected, he'll do far better than the 2,039 yards he passed for last season, while still posting Manziel-ish rushing figures.

1C. JADEVEON CLOWNEY, DE, SO. CAROLINA:

He's the No. 1 pick in the 2014 draft. We all know that. If he reproduces his menacing 13 sacks and 23.5 tackles for loss from last season, there aren't many reasons to not make him Mr. Heisman.

4. AJ MCCARRON, QB, ALABAMA:

If Bama wins it all again, he'll win this thing, too. Having the game plan in his hands isn't such a bad thing, as evidenced in the BCS national championship game. He threw 19 times in the first half as the Tide blew out Notre Dame before reverting to its punishing run game. The nation's leader in passing efficiency last season, McCarron has a big-time talent in WR Amari Cooper and his yardage and TD totals will jump further off the page this year.

5. AARON MURRAY, QB, GEORGIA:

He has 10,091 career yards and 95 touchdowns, and he's going to be the proud owner of many conference records when he's done. The Heisman, though, will be about how many big victories he accumulates. He started to shed a can't-get-it-done-in-a-big-game label with 427 yards and five touchdowns in a bowl win over Nebraska (and he was plenty good in

the Dawgs' near miss against Alabama in the SEC Championship Game).

6. MARQISE LEE, WR, USC:

He is the best receiver in the country, already with 191 catches for 2,864 yards and 25 touchdowns in his two-year career. And that's not even taking into account his good work on kick returns. He was fourth in Heisman balloting last season, and the Trojans will need to rely on him even more this year. Question is, can he post numbers with a new QB, without Robert Woods on the other side, and with Lane Kiffin still calling plays?

7. TEDDY BRIDGEWATER, QB, LOUISVILLE:

The junior has the size, arm and smarts to become a very high pick in the 2014 draft. He passed for 3,718 yards, with 27 touchdowns and eight interceptions, last season, completing 68.5 percent of his passes. And the Cards could be (nearly) as good as the school's basketball teams.

8. MARCUS MARIOTA, QB, OREGON:

There's not really that much difference between Mariota and Manziel — Chip Kelly knew what he was doing when he got commitments from both of them — except Manziel had more running opportunities and the win over top-ranked Alabama. Oregon often won by such a large margin, that Mariota could cool his jets in the second half, but he still passed for 2,677 yards and 32 touchdowns and ran for 752 yards. Problem is, RB-WR-KR De'Anthony Thomas could be the best player on the best team in America, and UCLA QB Brett Hundley will get all the pub if the Bruins get on a roll.

9. TAJH BOYD, QB, CLEMSON:

Boyd is good for more than 3,800 passing yards and 30-plus touchdown passes, so we know he has the "counting" stats covered. If the Tigers are a top 10 team, and the schedule suggests that's a possibility, then Boyd will be right in the thick of the Heisman chatter.

10. T.J. YELDON, RB, ALABAMA:

A productive running back on a top-ranked team? That worked out pretty well for winner Mark Ingram in 2009, and finalist Trent Richardson in 2011.

BCS MATCHUPS

The BCS National Championship Game era ends in Pasadena. Here's how *Lindy's* sees the biggest games shaking out this season:

ROSE BOWL

Wednesday, Jan. 1 • Pasadena, Calif. • Rose Bowl

Big Ten #1 vs. Pac-12 #1 • **Lindy's pick:** Michigan vs. Stanford

ORANGE BOWL

Friday, Jan. 3 • Miami • Sun Life Stadium

ACC #1 vs. BCS at-large • **Lindy's pick:** Clemson vs. Louisville

SUGAR BOWL

Thursday, Jan. 2 • New Orleans • Louisiana Superdome

SEC #1 vs. BCS at-large • **Lindy's pick:** Texas A&M vs. Florida State

FIESTA BOWL

Wednesday, Jan. 1 • Glendale, Ariz. • Univ. of Phoenix Stadium

Big 12 #1 vs. BCS at-large • **Lindy's pick:** Oklahoma St. vs. Oregon

BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Monday, Jan. 6 • Pasadena, Calif. • Rose Bowl

BCS #1 vs. BCS #2 • **Lindy's pick:** Alabama vs. Ohio State

PLAY FAST

Two things happened at NAIA school Glenville State a little more than two decades ago — one by accident, the other by foresight — that influences major college football (not to mention the NFL) more than anything today.

It so happened that quarterback Jed Drenning bobbled a practice handoff before regaining possession and his composure. After that unplanned hesitation, he noticed the defensive end had pinched inside to stop the running back, so Drenning took off running to that vacated spot.

"Why did you do that?" coach Rich Rodriguez queried him later.

Drenning replied that he had, basically, *read* the defensive end.

Well, wasn't that interesting ...

Rodriguez took that moment of serendipity, made an entire offense out of it, and then married the scheme to what he knew to be the toughest thing to defend — the two-minute drill. The concepts of the read-option and no-huddle tempo began to go mainstream when he moved up to coordinator at Tulane in 1997, then at Clemson in 1999 and then as the head coach at West Virginia in 2001.

Others learned from it, fiddled with it, copied it — and Chip Kelly might have darn near perfected it — but that's the basis for a sport that continues to pack more plays into every 60-minute period.

There were an average of 71.5 plays per team in 2012.

The average was 69.8 in 2011.

It was 68.4 in 2010.

It was 67.7 in each of the previous two years.

In that five-season span — starting in 2008 when the NCAA implemented new clock rules to actually shorten the length of games — total offense per team increased from 371.6 yards per game to 409.2. Scoring has increased from 27.2 points per team in 2008 to 29.5 last season.

This is a high-volume business, and coaches are cramming more inventory into every game by eliminating the middleman: The huddle.

The huddle was your father's football. It's becoming as obsolete as leather helmets. Rodriguez calls it the "biggest waste of time in football."

The track meet continues. More plays, more yards, more points. Most of college football now moves at Twitter speed ... and it won't be slowing down in 2013.

HIGH-RISK, HIGH-REWARD:
COACHING CHANGES ABOUND

As the money generated by college football has increased, so have the stakes for winning.

Schools are investing in their football programs at an amazing rate, and fans demand immediate results for that investment.

That's why about one out of every four FBS teams will have a new face on the sideline this fall. The separation between the "haves" and the "have nots" has turned the coaching carousel into a food chain, with several high-risk, high-reward jobs at the BCS level changing hands every season.

Getting to a bowl game — particularly since that requires merely a .500 record — is not enough to maintain job security in today's coaching landscape. Every athletic director wants to land "the perfect fit," and there is too much money on the line to waste time if that fit is not in place.

For example, Dave Doeren at Northern Illinois, and Darrell Hazell at Kent State turned in great seasons, so NC State and Purdue — bowl teams in 2011 and 2012 — shook up their programs to bring in a young coach on the rise. Of course, Northern Illinois and Kent State then had to replace their coaches and hope that their program-changing seasons were not a flash in the pan.

Sometimes, the big boys raid the big boys, too. Bret Bielema led Wisconsin to three straight Big Ten titles but was poached by Arkansas. Still, it's moving up — in this case from a strong Big Ten school to just another team in the SEC.

ARKANSAS

Out: John L. Smith **In:** Bret Bielema

Razorbacks athletic director Jeff Long let the rest of the nation speculate while he convinced Bielema to leave Wisconsin after three straight Big Ten titles. The shocker of the offseason is easily the most impressive, as Arkansas lands a proven winner to get them back into SEC West contention. Bielema's physical brand of football fits the conference, but not Petrino's personnel. He should get a few seasons of leeway. **A *Lindy's* Top 5 hire.**

ARKANSAS STATE

Out: Gus Malzahn **In:** Bryan Harsin

Harsin, like Malzahn and Hugh Freeze before him, is a creative offensive mind who should fit right in at Arkansas State. The issue for the first-year head coach will be continuing the Red Wolves' two-year streak of 10-win seasons and Sun Belt titles. Harsin's 10 years at Boise State included five as Chris Petersen's offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach before taking the same job with Mack Brown at Texas. Harsin is no stranger to success; he just needs to keep it alive in Jonesboro.

AUBURN

Out: Gene Chizik **In:** Gus Malzahn

Malzahn's return to Auburn will flash fans back to that memorable 2010 BCS title run, which will help erase the memory of a winless SEC performance in 2012. Malzahn spent just a year at Arkansas State after leaving his post as Chizik's offensive coordinator, but in that year, he led a Top 25 offense to a Sun Belt title. The smartest decision of his early career may have been bringing in veteran SEC assistant Ellis Johnson as his defensive coordinator. **A *Lindy's* Top 5 hire.**

BOSTON COLLEGE

Out: Frank Spaziani **In:** Steve Addazio

Addazio's high-energy style might be just what Boston College needs after the Eagles' win total dropped every year under Spaziani. The former Temple coach and Florida offensive coordinator has already tapped into the transfer market to replenish the roster for 2013, but Addazio will need to tap into his Connecticut roots and re-establish Boston College as a landing spot for top talent in the Northeast if the Eagles are going to get back to bowling on an annual basis.

CALIFORNIA

Out: Jeff Tedford **In:** Sonny Dykes

Tedford was well-liked by many around the Cal community, and well-respected in the league, but the program lacked the excitement necessary to fill remodeled Memorial Stadium. The hiring of Dykes comes with expectations that things will not be boring for much longer in Berkeley. Dykes and offensive coordinator Tony Franklin might not be able to recreate the No. 1 offense in the nation immediately, but fans look at Louisiana Tech's numbers from 2012 (51.5 points per game, 577.9 yards per game) and anticipate a new era of Cal football. **A *Lindy's* Top 5 hire.**

CINCINNATI

Out: Butch Jones **In:** Tommy Tuberville

Every 2-3 years nowadays, the Cincinnati coach bails for a big paycheck at a high-profile program, as Jones follows Mark Dantonio (MSU) and Brian Kelly (Notre Dame) out of Steppingstone U. It serves UC right after it dumped loyal, successful Rick Minter a decade ago. Tuberville, meantime, is not exactly a young, rising star, but he never was a great fit at Texas Tech, so he's happy to get another fresh start.

COLORADO

Out: Jon Embree **In:** Mike MacIntyre

Maybe we did not realize how bad things had gotten at Colorado, but after athletic director Mike Bohn spent an hour venting at the press conference for Embree's dismissal, the situation became crystal clear. MacIntyre has his hands full trying to rebuild Colorado, but his experience taking San Jose State from 1-12 to 10-2 in just three years gives some hope to those in Boulder. We DO realize how hard it is to win at San Jose State, and this guy did it. **A *Lindy's* Top 5 hire.**

FIU

Out: Mario Cristobal **In:** Ron Turner

The firing of Cristobal resulted in a lot of head scratching from the FIU faithful, particularly after the Sun Belt title-winning coach was not replaced by rumored candidate Butch Davis. A 29-day coaching search resulted in Tampa Bay quarterbacks coach and former Illinois head man Turner taking over the program. Turner has a Big Ten title (2001) to his name and a lengthy resume as a college assistant, but his tenure with the Illini ended thanks to just one conference win in his final two seasons.

GEORGIA STATE

Out: Bill Curry **In:** Trent Miles Curry led the Panthers from infancy to the FBS, but following his 10-23 mark (1-10 last year), the Panthers will start play in the Sun Belt with energetic Trent Miles. He turned around Indiana State's moribund program (his alma mater), but now he's got big-time teams on his schedule.

IDAHO

Out: Robb Akey **In:** Paul Petrino

Considering the circumstances for Idaho football, athletic director Rob Spear landed a strong hire in Paul Petrino. The Vandals are an FBS independent, unwanted leftovers from the WAC's decimation in conference realignment. Petrino is a coaching lifer with experience coaching alongside big brother Bobby at Louisville, Arkansas and with the Atlanta Falcons. Now he returns to Idaho, where he was an assistant from 1992-94.

KENT STATE

Out: Darrell Hazell **In:** Paul Haynes

Hazell's school-record 11-win season made him a top candidate for every job opening in the offseason, so his exit did not come as a surprise. Instead of looking in a new direction, AD Joel Nielsen hired Arkansas DC Paul Haynes, a former Kent State defensive back who served as secondary coach in 1999-2000. Hazell and Haynes both served as defensive assistants on Jim Tressel's Ohio State staff.

KENTUCKY

Out: Joker Phillips **In:** Mark Stoops

Want a sign that Mark Stoops has people excited about Kentucky football? Check the school-record 50,831 fans in attendance for the Wildcats' spring game. After he coached Florida State's defense into one of the nation's best units, Stoops did some impressive work on the recruiting trail, but he still faces the toughest part of the job: winning in the SEC.

LOUISIANA TECH

Out: Sonny Dykes **In:** Skip Holtz

Louisiana Tech would like to figure out a way to replicate their recent WAC success in Conference USA. So when Dykes left for Cal, the Bulldogs reached out to the recently dismissed Holtz. Holtz may have stumbled at USF, but he led East Carolina to back-to-back Conference USA titles in 2008 and 2009. As the Bulldogs enter foreign territory, Holtz gives them a sense of familiarity.

NC STATE

Out: Tom O'Brien **In:** Dave Doeren

O'Brien's NC State teams reached the postseason in four of his six seasons, but the school demanded Top 25 finishes — something O'Brien did just once. Doeren is a noted recruiter and had major success at Northern Illinois. Wolfpack fans are hoping to see the high-powered attack that helped NIU average 41 points last season, but it'll take time.

NEVADA

Out: Chris Ault **In:** Brian Polian

Father of the Pistol offense, Ault led Nevada to five straight winning seasons before retiring at the age of 66 with a 233-109-1 record. Brian Polian, 38, was Texas A&M's special teams coordinator in 2012 after serving in the same role at Stanford and Notre Dame. In addition to being the son of longtime NFL exec Bill Polian, Brian carries a strong reputation as a recruiter in the college game.

NEW MEXICO STATE

Out: DeWayne Walker **In:** Doug Martin

Like Idaho, New Mexico State is in a tough position as an FBS independent that could not find a home after the WAC fell apart. With no bowl appearances since 1960 and a long history of losing streaks, the Aggies reached out to former offensive coordinator Doug Martin (who spent 2012 on Frank Spaziani's Boston College staff) to replace DeWayne Walker, who was unsuccessful in four years of trying to turn around the program.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Out: Dave Doeren **In:** Rod Carey

Doeren's decision to accept the NC State job came just one day after the Huskies captured their second straight MAC championship. With no plans of straying from their winning ways, offensive line coach Rod Carey was promoted immediately.

OREGON

Out: Chip Kelly **In:** Mark Helfrich

Helfrich, like Kelly and Mike Bellotti before him, moves to the Oregon head coaching job after a successful stint as offensive coordinator. The Ducks' high-speed attack continued to flourish under Helfrich's leadership, and it does not sound like there are many plans to fix what isn't broken (Scott Frost moves from receivers coach to offensive coordinator). The NCAA's ongoing investigation into the program makes the crystal ball a bit murky, though.

PURDUE

Out: Danny Hope **In:** Darrell Hazell

In just two years as head coach, Hazell led Kent State to the program's first 11-win season, first MAC division title, and first bowl appearance since 1972. That success, paired with his Big Ten experience as a Jim Tressel assistant at Ohio State, made him the ideal Big Ten coaching candidate this offseason. Still, a Purdue coach getting fired after back-to-back bowls is crazy.

SAN JOSE STATE

Out: Mike MacIntyre **In:** Ron Caragher

In order to find a replacement for MacIntyre (who left for Colorado) after one of the program's most successful seasons in recent memory, AD Gene Bleymaier turned to Caragher, from FCS San Diego, Jim Harbaugh's old post. Caragher led USD to conference titles in three of his six seasons on the job, but continuing MacIntyre's success in the Mountain West will be a challenge.

SOUTHERN MISS

Out: Ellis Johnson **In:** Todd Monken

After straying from the formula once, Southern Miss returned to Oklahoma State to hire an offensive coordinator for the third time in four coaching searches. Monken, like Jeff Bower and Larry Fedora, brings an impressive resume of offensive success with the Cowboys, leading a unit that ranked in the Top 5 nationally in each of the past two seasons. After a program-worst 0-12 showing in 2012, fans will be happy to see any positives from Monken's squad in 2013.

SYRACUSE

Out: Doug Marrone **In:** Scott Shafer

Because the NFL schedule runs longer than college, losing a coach to the pros can put an athletic director a month behind schedule in finding his replacement. When the Bills hired Marrone, Syracuse quickly promoted defensive coordinator Shafer to the job, giving the Orange as much continuity as possible for its move to the ACC.

TENNESSEE

Out: Derek Dooley **In:** Butch Jones

Tennessee took a hard run at Louisville's Charlie Strong, and Oklahoma State's Mike Gundy, and even Jon Gruden ... so even though Jones was the Big East Coach of the Year in 2011, he doesn't bring the gravitas that Vol Nation was building for (sigh, remember how Dooley landed in Knoxville

after Lane Kiffin bolted for USC). Still, Jones held off pursuits from Colorado and Purdue hoping to land in a place like Neyland Stadium, so this could be a good match.

TEMPLE

Out: Steve Addazio **In:** Matt Rhule

The Owls found a familiar face to lead the program in the new American Athletic Conference. Rhule joined Al Golden's Temple staff in 2006 and eventually became the Owls' offensive coordinator before Addazio took over in 2012. Rhule knows the challenges Temple must overcome to rebuild the energy around the program, but the 37-year old Pennsylvania native seems up to the task.

TEXAS TECH

Out: Tommy Tuberville **In:** Kliff Kingsbury

As a quarterback, Kliff Kingsbury was fast and productive. As an assistant coach, the record-breaking Red Raiders star has been the same. Success tutoring quarterbacks at Houston and Texas A&M (hello, Johnny Football) turned into an opportunity to return to Lubbock as one of the youngest head coaches in football. Raider fans, of course, consider Kingsbury one of their own — a feeling that never caught on with the former staff.

USF

Out: Skip Holtz **In:** Willie Taggart

Taggart found success at his alma mater (Western Kentucky), and now the Bradenton, Fla., native will try to do the same near his hometown. Taggart played at WKU for Jack Harbaugh, and then later coached on Jim Harbaugh's staff at Stanford, before moving to Western Kentucky (14-10 the past two years). **A *Lindy's* Top 5 hire.**

UTEP

Out: Mike Price **In:** Sean Kugler

Price couldn't sustain the early success he had in El Paso, and so the Miners get a new start under Kugler. After his playing career at UTEP, Kugler has spent more than a decade as an offensive line coach in the NFL, along with a season (2006) on the staff at Boise State.

UTAH STATE

Out: Gary Andersen **In:** Matt Wells

Offensive coordinator Wells, a former Aggies QB, was promoted to the head coaching job the day Andersen left for Wisconsin. Wells has a tough task ahead, leading the Aggies from the WAC into the Mountain West with no head coaching experience and a new set of expectations following Utah State's 11-win season.

WESTERN KENTUCKY

Out: Willie Taggart **In:** Bobby Petrino

Petrino's messy exit from Arkansas (following his messy exit from the Atlanta Falcons), made it tough for BCS athletic directors to take him seriously. But for WKU, Petrino was an easy choice to try to build on the success started by Taggart. The former Arkansas coach needs a fresh start somewhere, and WKU — thanks to the $1.5-million buyout from Arkansas — is willing to take that risk.

WESTERN MICHIGAN

Out: Bill Cubit **In:** P.J. Fleck

Even young head coaches like Kliff Kingsbury and Matt Campbell look like veterans compared to 32-year old Fleck. Fleck turned to coaching after two uneventful seasons of pro ball, returning to his alma mater Northern Illinois before following Greg Schiano from Rutgers to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Fleck has never even been a coordinator at the college level, so the first-year Broncos coach has plenty to prove this fall.

WISCONSIN

Out: Bret Bielema **In:** Gary Andersen

Andersen had the appearance of Utah lifer. The Salt Lake City native spent 11 seasons as a defensive assistant for the Utes, one as head coach at Southern Utah, and four seasons turning Utah State into a WAC conference champion. But Badgers' AD Barry Alvarez saw a 48-year-old coach on the rise that could keep Wisconsin going in the right direction.

HOT SEAT COACHES

Get these guys some flame-retardant britches. Win now, fellas...

1. LANE KIFFIN, USC — He's done some good, navigating the program through a bowl ban and scholarship reductions, but the team's 2012 flameout and his pettiness (lying about voting his team No. 1, banning a reporter from practice, changing a player's uniform number during a game) speaks to a coach still striving for maturity. Athletic director Pat Haden jettisoned basketball coach Kevin O'Neill during the middle of the last season, so Kiffin will have his AD's full attention. **PREDICTION:** Not sure if there is a magic win total to save Kiffin; it's more of a matter of whether Haden thinks Kiffin is the long-term answer. We'll guess no.

2. BOBBY HAUCK, UNLV — This simply hasn't worked, with Hauck going 6-32 in three seasons, including a 5-18 record in the Mountain West. Time for the Rebels to roll the dice again ... **PREDICTION:** There won't be enough progress in Year 4 for Hauck to continue.

3. RANDY EDSALL, MARYLAND — The third-year Terps coach is just 6-18, dealing with mass transfers early in his tenure and then a shortage of healthy quarterbacks last season. With the program moving to the Big Ten in 2014, might Maryland want to unpack in a new conference with a shiny new coach? **PREDICTION:** Edsall will show just enough improvement to hang on.

4. RON ENGLISH, EASTERN MICHIGAN — Just because this is one of the toughest jobs in college football doesn't excuse a 10-38 record in four years. **PREDICTION:** None of the previous four EMU coaches lasted past five seasons. This won't break the trend.

5. MACK BROWN, TEXAS — He's 150-43 at Texas with a national championship, so we feel we should preface the mention of Brown on this list with the phrase "with all due respect." But here's another phrase — "It is what it is" — and a 22-16 record in the past three years for a coach who will be 62 this season will invite talk of retirement, voluntary or otherwise, fair or unfair. **PREDICTION:** Perhaps we're still blinded by the raw talent on hand, but the Longhorns should be good enough moving forward to send Brown off on his own terms ... whenever that is.

SNEAK PEEK

NFLDraftScout.com gave us their annual year-in-advance look at the NFL Draft. After a substandard 2013 draft for quarterbacks, it looks like NFL teams will have multiple chances for a franchise passer in the top half of the first round.

Jadeveon Clowney

Photo by Jeff Blake-USA TODAY Sports

NO. PLAYER	POS.	SCHOOL
1. Jadeveon Clowney*	DE	South Carolina
2. Tajh Boyd	QB	Clemson
3. Teddy Bridgewater*	QB	Louisville
4. Marqise Lee*	WR	USC
5. Stephon Tuitt*	DE	Notre Dame
6. Anthony Barr	OLB	UCLA
7. C.J. Mosley	LB	Alabama
8. Jake Matthews	OT	Texas A&M
9. Aaron Murray	QB	Georgia
10. Austin Seferian-Jenkins*	TE	Washington
11. Will Sutton	DL	Arizona State
12. Jackson Jeffcoat	DE	Texas
13. Ka'Deem Carey*	RB	Arizona
14. Bradley Roby*	CB	Ohio State
15. Taylor Lewan	OT	Michigan
16. AJ McCarron	QB	Alabama
17. Shayne Skov	LB	Stanford
18. Daniel McCullers	DT	Tennessee
19. Jason Verrett	CB	TCU
20. Cyrus Kouandjio*	OT	Alabama
21. Calvin Barnett	DT	Oklahoma State
22. Brandon Coleman*	WR	Rutgers
23. A.J. Johnson*	LB	Tennessee
24. Aaron Colvin	CB	Oklahoma
25. Kareem Martin	DE	North Carolina
26. Morgan Breslin	DE	USC
27. Cyril Richardson	OG	Baylor
28. Kyle Van Noy	LB	BYU
29. Zack Martin	OT	Notre Dame
30. Jordan Matthews	WR	Vanderbilt
31. Silas Redd	RB	USC
32. Logan Thomas	QB	Virginia Tech
33. Deandre Coleman	DT	California
34. Cody Hoffman	WR	BYU
35. Damien Williams	RB	Oklahoma
36. Gabe Jackson	OG	Mississippi State
37. Zach Mettenberger	QB	LSU
38. James Gayle	DE	Virginia Tech
39. Darqueze Dennard	CB	Michigan State
40. Trent Murphy	OLB	Stanford
41. Kevin Norwood	WR	Alabama
42. Justin Gilbert	CB	Oklahoma State
43. TJ Jones	WR	Notre Dame
44. Ben Gardner	DE	Stanford
45. Anthony Steen	OG	Alabama
46. Seantrel Henderson	OT	Miami (Fla.)
47. LaDarius Perkins	RB	Mississippi State
48. Christian Jones	OLB	Florida State
49. Bennett Jackson	CB	Notre Dame
50. Stephen Morris	QB	Miami (Fla.)

*Underclassman

TOP 12 NON-CONFERENCE GAMES

1. GEORGIA AT CLEMSON, AUG. 31:

This is what we like — an opening-weekend battle that has major national championship implications and two great senior quarterbacks. The Dawgs have Aaron Murray and an SEC schedule about as forgiving as possible, greasing the path to the conference title game. Clemson counters with Tajh Boyd and momentum from beating LSU in the Chick-fil-A Bowl. They share a tantalizing launching pad, but only one gets to take off.

2. NOTRE DAME AT STANFORD, NOV. 30:

Stepfan Taylor twisting, churning, reaching for the goal line in overtime, only to be ruled down, was one of the indelible images of the 2012 season. The game, that moment, helped propel the Irish to the national title game while Stanford "settled" for the Rose Bowl. Both teams return as top 10 timber — or better — in one of the year's great clashes of big-boy power football.

3. ALABAMA VS. VIRGINIA TECH (IN ATLANTA), AUG. 31:

The rest of Alabama's non-conference schedule is what you would expect — snoozeville — but credit to the Tide, which likes to kick off its season with a goodie. Nick Saban's crew began its national championship season in 2009 right here — Atlanta, vs. Virginia Tech — and started last season's run with a neutral-field beat-down of Michigan. Tech's hope is that quarterback Logan Thomas goes crazy before the Alabama defense finds its footing.

4. FLORIDA STATE AT FLORIDA, NOV. 30:

FSU's Jimbo Fisher had gone 6-0 against in-state opponents until his 'Noles coughed up five turnovers in a 37-26 home loss to the Gators last November. The Gators dominated the series with six consecutive wins from 2004 to 2009, then Florida State won two in a row before last season ... and now, this is looking like the top 10 matchup it should be annually.

5. OKLAHOMA AT NOTRE DAME, SEPT. 28:

We just like the sound of it: Oklahoma-Notre Dame. The classic series, largely dormant for more than four decades, was revived last season ... well, at least on Notre Dame's side. The Irish slapped the sleepy Sooners in Norman, 30-13, and the echoes of that game could translate into revenge in South Bend.

6. CLEMSON AT SOUTH CAROLINA, NOV. 30:

It's time this rivalry starts resembling, well, an actual rivalry. The Gamecocks have won the past four meetings, all by double digits, and have allowed an average of 13.5 points in those games.

7. LSU VS. TCU (IN ARLINGTON, TEXAS), AUG. 31:

Yet another reason why the opening weekend of college football is as important as the last, and why kickoff can't get here quickly enough. The experienced Frogs, especially gritty on defense (yeah, so what's new?), will test the mettle of LSU quarterback Zach Mettenberger, whose improvement is paramount in order for the Tigers and their rebuilt defense to hold their place among the national elite.

8. NOTRE DAME AT MICHIGAN, SEPT. 7:

The Irish picked off five passes and forced six turnovers overall as they slogged to a 13-6 victory last season. Brian Kelly and Brady Hoke have brought back these great programs, in short order, from tough times, pushing this game back toward must-see territory.

9. UCLA AT NEBRASKA, SEPT. 14:

Love the quarterback matchup. UCLA's Brett Hundley announced his presence as a freshman when he went for a total of 358 yards in last season's meeting (a 36-30 Bruins win in the Rose Bowl), while Taylor Martinez accounted for 271 total yards.

10. FLORIDA AT MIAMI, SEPT. 7:

It seems like a natural rivalry, but these in-state foes have met only three times in the regular season since 1987 (with two bowl games mixed in). The renewal should be a beaut. It's especially intriguing early in the season as a pair of quarterbacks — Florida's Jeff Driskel and Miami's Stephen Morris — will be in prove-it mode.

11. TENNESSEE AT OREGON, SEPT. 14:

It's all about the new coaches. Different situations to be sure, with Oregon's Mark Helfrich stepping into the big shoes of Chip Kelly, while Butch Jones steps into the big mess left by a pair of post-Phillip Fulmer coaches. Each would like validation in the third game of the season.

12. BOISE STATE AT WASHINGTON, AUG. 31:

How often do you see it? Teams that played a tight, entertaining bowl game — the Broncos won 28-26 in Las Vegas on a late field goal and interception — start off the next year against each other. Yeah, never. That's why this game makes the list.

Apologies to USC at Notre Dame (Oct. 19) ... the Irish have too many other big games.

Clemson quarterback Tajh Boyd (10) hands the ball off to running back Andre Ellington (23) against Georgia Tech.

Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

TOP 12 CONFERENCE GAMES

Texas A&M defensive lineman Kirby Ennis (42) tackles Alabama quarterback AJ McCarron (10).

Photo by AP Photo/Dave Martin

1. ALABAMA AT TEXAS A&M, SEPT. 14:

Johnny Football vs. Alabama. Round 2. That is all.

2. OREGON AT STANFORD, NOV. 7:

College football's ultimate battle of speed vs. power is deadlocked at two apiece in the past four meetings, with the Cardinal shocking the top-rated Ducks late last season and winning the Pac-12 North Division (and allowing a certain team from Tuscaloosa to get back into the national title game). Now, let's see if the Ducks can squirm out of Stanford's headlock.

3. LSU AT ALABAMA, NOV. 9:

To recap, in 2011, No. 1 LSU beat No. 2 Alabama in Tuscaloosa, 9-6, before the second-ranked Tide emphatically turned the tables on top-ranked LSU in the BCS national championship game. Last season, No. 1 Alabama pulled off the miracle comeback — T.J. Yeldon scoring on a 28-yard swing pass — to win 21-17 in Tiger Stadium. Overall, the last three regular-season games have been decided by a total of 10 points. Expect anything different?

4. SOUTH CAROLINA AT GEORGIA, SEPT. 7:

The Gamecocks have won three in a row in the series but have little to show for the past two victories, because subsequent losses allowed the Bulldogs to claim the SEC East. This year's post-Georgia conference schedule is easier, so Steve Spurrier's fellas aren't as likely to be backpedaling in the division if they can get a leg up on the Dawgs one more time.

5. TEXAS A&M AT LSU, NOV. 23:

Each of these teams will have played Alabama by now, so it's hard to know what it will mean. A battle for No. 1? SEC West? BCS at-large berth? Heisman Trophy? LSU's defense (now dearly departed) took a bite out of Johnny Manziel last season, picking him off three times, sacking him three times and limiting him to 27 yards rushing.

6. WISCONSIN AT OHIO STATE, SEPT. 28:

Two teams that got rings last season. The Badgers won the Big Ten title game and became official champions, while the probation-laden Buckeyes really were the best team in the league, going 12-0, a feat deemed so special that the athletic department chipped in for the ring bling (shouldn't that be against the rules?). After Ohio State took a 21-14 overtime victory last season, this time the game really counts for both teams.

7. FLORIDA VS. GEORGIA (JACKSONVILLE), NOV. 2:

Dawgs quarterback Aaron Murray is 2-1 against the Gators but has never completed more than 50 percent of his passes. He is 45 of 95 with seven interceptions and six touchdowns vs. UF, needing to be rescued by Georgia's defense (six turnovers, including a late fumble) in a 17-9 win last season.

8. FLORIDA STATE AT CLEMSON, OCT. 19:

This has been high-scoring and entertaining the past two years, with the winner going on to claim the Atlantic Division and entry into the ACC Championship Game. It probably will be the same story this season. This time, Clemson has the home-field edge, the quarterback advantage and (maybe) a defense that can hold the 'Noles to something less than the 667 yards they threw down last year in winning, 49-37.

9. OHIO STATE AT MICHIGAN, NOV. 30:

Urban Meyer is 1-up on Brady Hoke, who doesn't want to become the rivalry whipping boy like Lloyd Carr was to Jim Tressel. The first of two? Can't rule out a rematch a week later in the Big Ten Championship Game.

10. UCLA AT USC, NOV. 30:

It's a classic that might be doing a 180. The Bruins have the better quarterback (Brett Hundley), the better coach (Jim Mora) and better momentum, coming off just their second victory over cross-town Troy in the past 14 years.

11. OKLAHOMA VS. TEXAS (DALLAS), OCT. 12:

Mack Brown has lost three in a row to Oklahoma in the Red River Rivalry, That's bad. This is worse: The Horns lost the last two *by a combined 80 points*. Lose like that again, and Brown could have plenty of time next year to sample Fletcher's Corny Dogs and fried bacon cinnamon rolls at the Texas State Fair.

12. FLORIDA AT LSU, OCT. 12:

Twice in the past four years, this matchup has failed to produce more than 20 total points. We can see that happening again, and that's not a bad thing.

COMEBACK PLAYERS (non-injury division)

Don't forget about these 10 players, who didn't see the field last season (or darn close to it):

Tom Savage, QB, Pitt: A 2009 Freshman All-American at Rutgers, Savage lost his starting job as a sophomore, transferred to Arizona for the 2011 season, but then headed back east after a semester because of family reasons. He landed at Pitt, where he had to sit out a second season because of transfer rules ... and, now, he could end up the starter for the Panthers as they head into the ACC.

Aaron Lynch, DE, USF: He had 5.5 sacks and 14 quarterback hurries as a true freshman at Notre Dame, but never shook a bout of homesickness and transferred back to his home state. The former big-time recruit now gets to cause havoc for new Bulls' coach Willie Taggart.

Tyler Gaffney, RB, Stanford: The fifth-year senior returned to school this spring after taking a sabbatical to play minor-league baseball last year. He gives coach David Shaw another physical back to pair with Anthony Wilkerson, as they complement the open-field skills of redshirt freshman Barry Sanders, whose pops could run a little, too. Gaffney carried 74 times for 449 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior in 2011.

Max Garcia and Tyler Moore, OL, Florida: A banged-up Florida offensive line found some relief this spring with the play of these two transfers from four-year schools. Garcia, a junior from Maryland, impressed at left guard, while Moore, a sophomore who started four games as a true freshman at Nebraska, came out as the projected starter at right tackle.

Tra Carson and Brandon Williams, RB, Texas A&M: Carson ran for 254 yards at Oregon as a freshman in 2011 and figures to be used as a short-yardage back in a crowded Aggies backfield. Williams, also played as a true freshman in 2011 — with OU not UO — carrying 46 times for 219 yards for the Sooners. He adds a slashing running style to the stable.

Malcolm Jones, RB, UCLA: He quit the Bruins after getting three carries on the final drive of the season-opener against Rice, then returned, hat in hand, after the season, asking to rejoin the program. Coach Jim Mora agreed to let him come back as a walk-on ... a very talented walk-on. While Jones' career has been modest so far, he has the pedigree — he was the 2009 Gatorade National High School Player of the Year — and the opportunity in a wide-open backfield competition after the loss of Johnathan Franklin.

Jake Heaps, QB, Kansas: Can a former BYU quarterback save the day for an ex-Notre Dame coach? The Jayhawks of Charlie Weis were one of three teams in the country to complete less than 50 percent of their passes last season (Southern Miss and Army were the others, to complete the trivia question), and new hopes are now pinned on Heaps, a former No. 1 quarterback recruit who started 16 games at BYU.

Pete Thomas, QB, North Carolina State: The transfer from Colorado State directed the first-team offense in the Wolfpack's spring game, and will continue to battle Manny Stocker in the fall to be the guy who replaces Mike Glennon in a more fast-paced spread system.

COMEBACK PLAYERS (injury division)

Here are 10 players who should make key impacts on their teams and conference races after a medical-hardship worthy season:

Devon Kennard, OLB, USC (torn pec): He was moved this spring from the Trojans' well-stocked defensive end position, to an outside 'backer spot. He's no stranger to linebacker, having started games in the middle. He'll be part of a strong front seven.

Blake Countess, CB, Michigan (ACL): The sophomore, who tore up his knee in last year's disastrous opener vs. Alabama, is expected back at full strength for the 2013 opener for a secondary that lost stalwarts Jordan Kovacs and J.T. Floyd.

C.J. Brown, QB, Maryland (ACL): The most hazardous position in college football last season was Maryland quarterback. Brown tore his ACL in fall camp and a series of replacements fell during the season until coach Randy Edsall was out of scholarship quarterbacks. Even though Brown was unable to do more than drill work in the spring, Edsall didn't hesitate to designate him as his 2013 starter ... and cross his fingers. Brown started five games in 2011.

Henry Josey, RB, Missouri (knee): He was leading the Big 12 in rushing (1,168 yards) when he shredded his knee in November 2011, requiring three surgeries and sitting out all of last season. He appeared to have regained his speed and cutting ability in the spring; Josey's return and a season of good health from QB James Franklin will add some punch to what was one of the worst offenses in the SEC.

Paul Richardson, WR, Colorado (ACL): A rare bright spot for the Buffs' offense, Richardson shined in the spring, looking fast and explosive and like one of the best receivers in the Pac-12. CU needs the boost after QB Jordan Webb suffered a torn ACL and co-starting quarterback Nick Hirschman decided to transfer after spring ball.

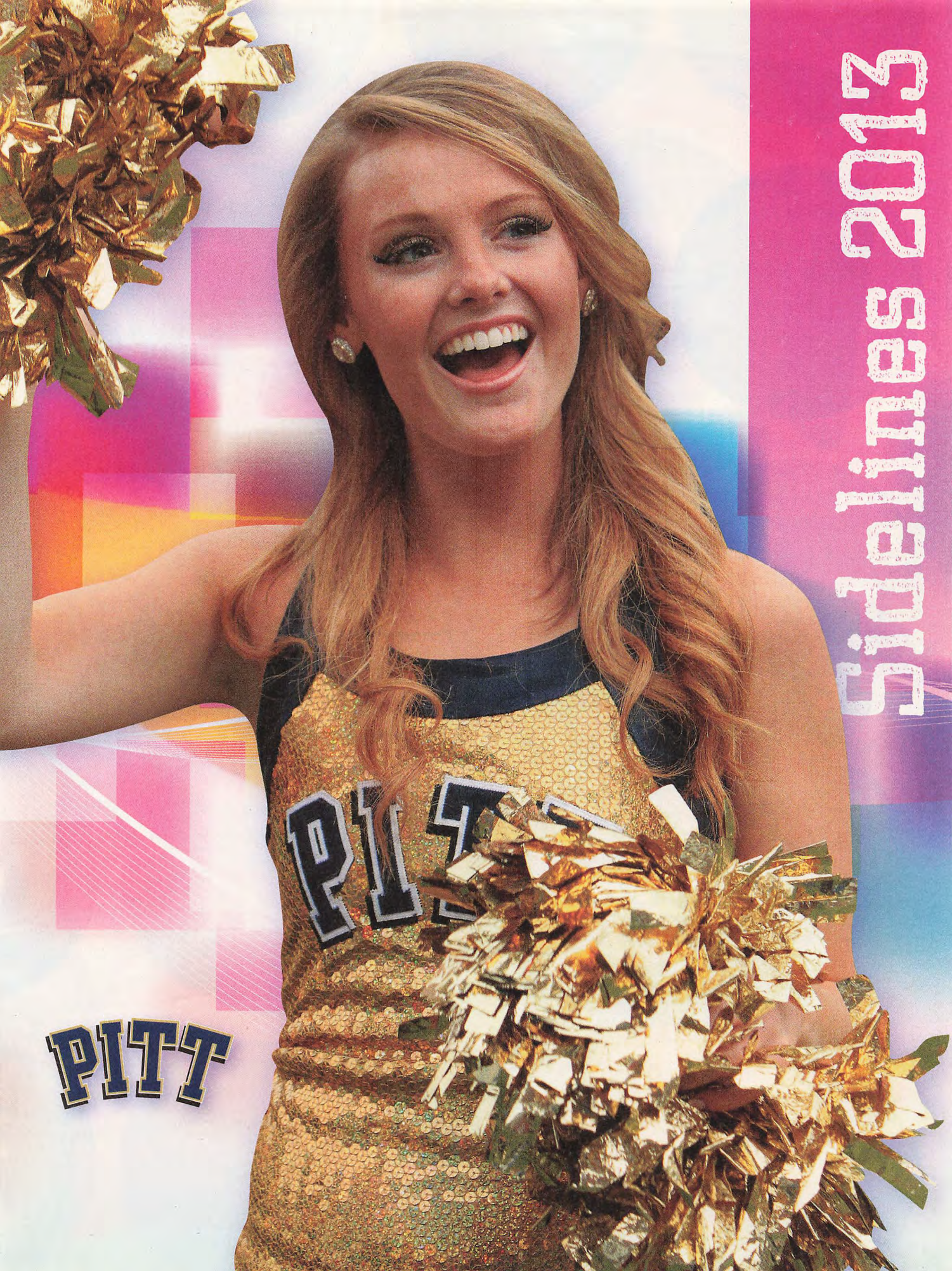
Jordan Hicks, LB, Texas (hip): Limited to three games last season, Hicks was back in the spring, excelling in the final scrimmage. He'll help patch a Longhorns defense that was a grizzly 88th nationally against the run, allowing 192.15 yards per game. (Note that defensive end Jackson Jeffcoat played in a mere six games because of injury last season, too.)

Alfred Blue, RB, LSU (ACL): He posted 100-yard games against North Texas and Washington to open last season before tearing an ACL against Idaho. The Tigers are so deep at running back that even with Spencer Ware and Michael Ford off early to the NFL, Blue will have to carve out a timeshare with big-time sophomore Jeremy Hill and Kenny Hilliard.

Ronald Powell, DE/OLB, Florida (ACL): The original injury occurred last spring and he re-tore the ACL during rehab, setting back his return until fall camp. Powell, ranked as the nation's No. 1 overall recruit in the 2010 class by Rivals.com, will be another weapon for Will Muschamp's stingy defense. Powell plays the team's premier pass-rushing spot, leading the team with six sacks in 2011.

D.T. Shackelford, LB, Ole Miss (ACL): Has missed two full seasons because of complications from the original injury, suffered in spring 2011. Shackelford, who led the team with five sacks in 2010, returned this spring and will be further working toward a key role again in the fall.

Michaelee Harris, WR, Louisville (knee): Poor kid has had four knee injuries since arriving at Louisville in 2010, managing to squeeze in a tantalizing season in 2011, when he led the team with 37 catches for 455 yards. We'll see in the fall if he regains playmaker status for QB Teddy Bridgewater.



Sidelines 2012

Tulsa
Tulsa
EBRASKA
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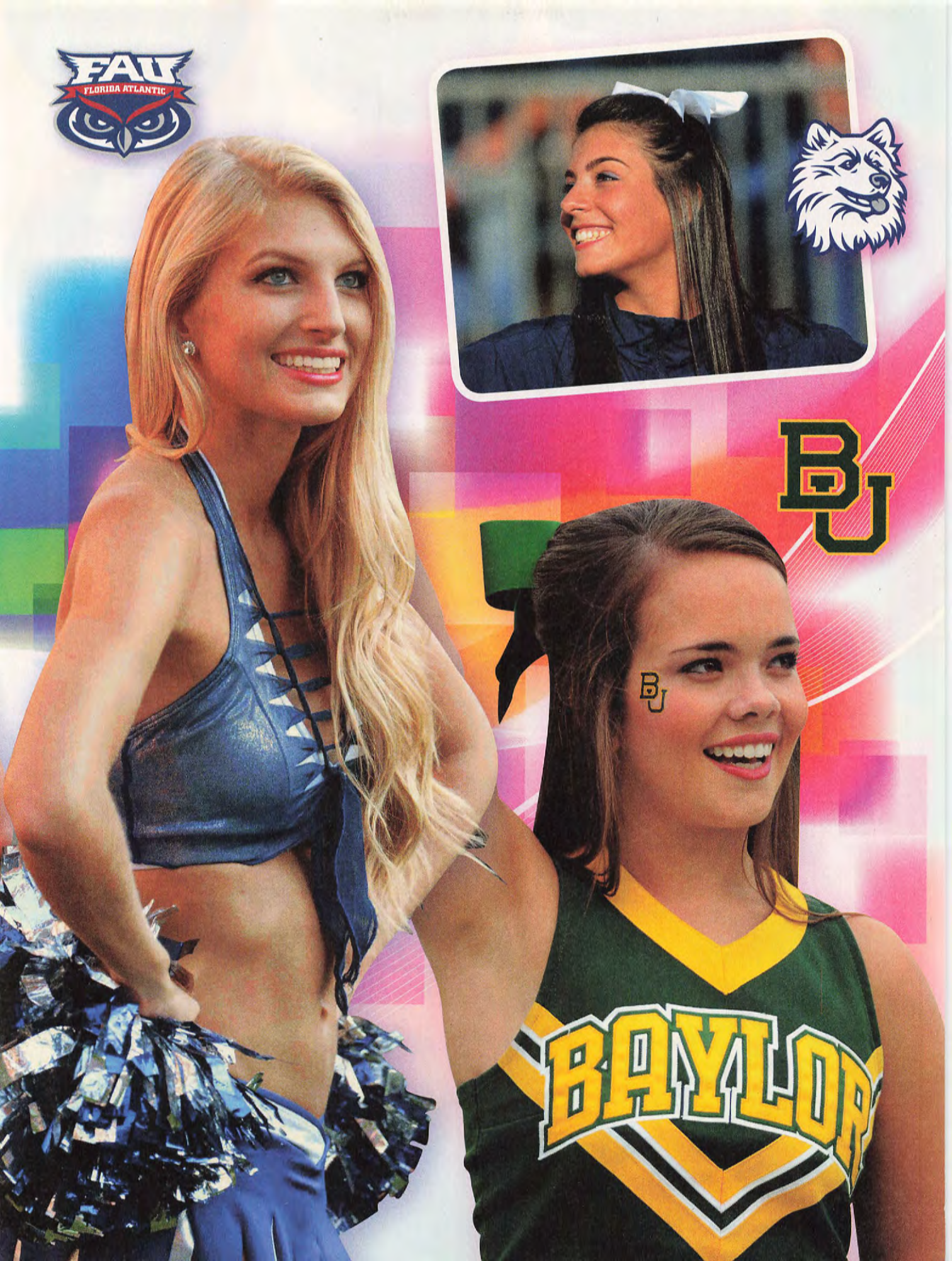
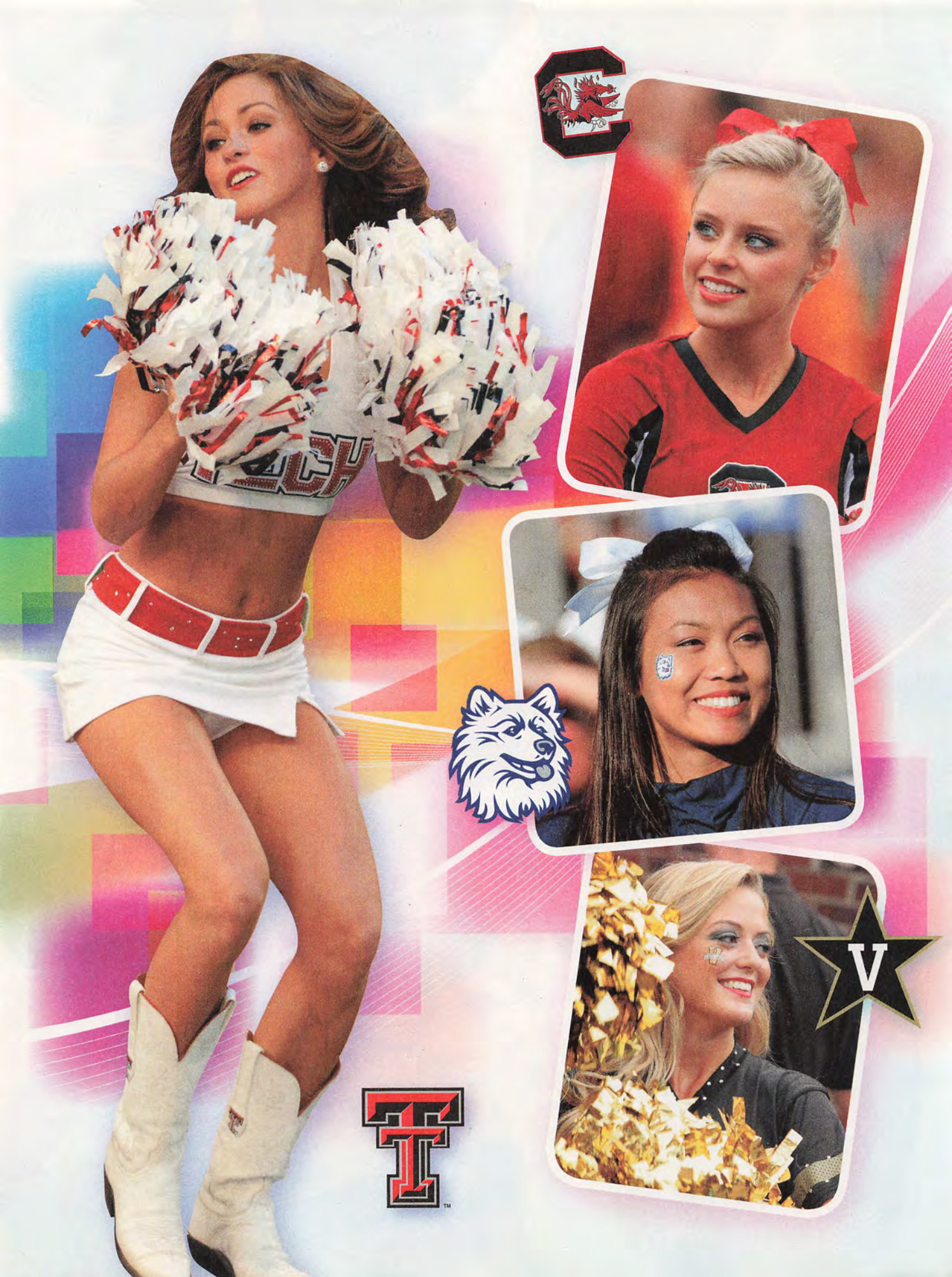

FAU
FLORIDA ATLANTIC
BU
BU
BAYLOR

USC

GT
V
OREGON
OREGON



Wrangler NATIONAL SCHEDULES

AAC

CENTRAL FLORIDA (UCF)
Aug. 29 AKRON
Sept. 7 at FIU
Sept. 14 at Penn State
Sept. 28 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 5 at Memphis
Oct. 18 at Louisville
Oct. 26 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 9 HOUSTON
Nov. 16 at Temple
Nov. 21 RUTGERS
Nov. 29 SOUTH FLORIDA
Dec. 7 at SMU

CINCINNATI
Aug. 31 PURDUE
Sept. 7 at Illinois
Sept. 14 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 21 at Miami (OH)
Oct. 5 at South Florida
Oct. 11 TEMPLE
Oct. 19 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 30 at Memphis
Nov. 9 SMU
Nov. 16 at Rutgers
Nov. 23 at Houston
Dec. 5 LOUISVILLE

CONNECTICUT
Aug. 29 TOWSON
Sept. 14 MARYLAND
Sept. 21 MICHIGAN
Sept. 28 at Buffalo
Oct. 12 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 19 at Cincinnati
Oct. 26 at UCF
Nov. 8 LOUISVILLE
Nov. 16 at SMU
Nov. 23 at Temple
Nov. 30 RUTGERS
Dec. 7 MEMPHIS

HOUSTON
Aug. 30 SOUTHERN
Sept. 7 at Temple
Sept. 21 vs. Rice (Houston, TX)
Sept. 28 at UTSA
Oct. 12 MEMPHIS
Oct. 19 BYU
Oct.26 at Rutgers
Oct. 31 SOUTH FLORIDA
Nov. 9 at UCF
Nov. 16 at Louisville
Nov. 23 CINCINNATI
Nov. 29 SMU

LOUISVILLE
Aug. 31 OHIO
Sept. 7 EASTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 14 at Kentucky
Sept. 21 FIU
Oct. 5 at Temple
Oct. 10 RUTGERS
Oct. 18 UCF
Oct. 26 at South Florida
Nov. 8 at Connecticut
Nov. 16 HOUSTON
Nov. 23 MEMPHIS
Dec. 5 at Cincinnati

MEMPHIS
Sept. 7 DUKE
Sept. 14 at Middle Tennessee
Sept. 21 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 5 UCF
Oct. 12 at Houston
Oct. 19 SMU
Oct. 30 CINCINNATI
Nov. 9 TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Nov. 16 at South Florida
Nov. 23 at Louisville
Nov. 30 TEMPLE
Dec. 7 at Connecticut

RUTGERS
Aug. 29 at Fresno State
Sept. 7 NORFOLK STATE
Sept. 14 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 21 ARKANSAS
Oct. 5 at SMU
Oct. 10 at Louisville
Oct. 26 HOUSTON
Nov. 2 TEMPLE
Nov. 16 CINCINNATI
Nov. 21 at UCF
Nov. 30 at Connecticut
Dec. 7 SOUTH FLORIDA

SMU
Aug. 30 TEXAS TECH
Sept. 7 MONTANA STATE
Sept. 21 at Texas A&M
Sept. 28 at TCU
Oct. 5 RUTGERS
Oct. 19 at Memphis
Oct. 26 TEMPLE
Nov. 9 at Cincinnati
Nov. 16 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 23 at South Florida
Nov. 29 at Houston
Dec. 7 UCF

SOUTH FLORIDA
Aug. 31 McNEESE STATE
Sept. 7 at Michigan State
Sept. 14 FAU
Sept. 28 MIAMI
Oct. 5 CINCINNATI
Oct. 12 at Connecticut
Oct. 26 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 31 at Houston
Nov. 16 MEMPHIS
Nov. 23 SMU
Nov. 29 at UCF
Dec. 7 at Rutgers

TEMPLE
Aug. 31 at Notre Dame
Sept. 7 HOUSTON
Sept. 14 FORDHAM
Sept. 28 at Idaho
Oct. 5 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 11 at Cincinnati
Oct. 19 ARMY
Oct. 26 at SMU
Nov. 2 at Rutgers
Nov. 16 UCF
Nov. 23 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 30 at Memphis

ACC

BOSTON COLLEGE
Aug. 31 VILLANOVA
Sept. 6 WAKE FOREST
Sept. 14 at USC
Sept. 28 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 5 ARMY
Oct. 12 at Clemson
Oct. 26 at North Carolina
Nov. 2 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 9 at New Mexico State
Nov. 16 NC STATE
Nov. 23 at Maryland
Nov. 30 at Syracuse

CLEMSON
Aug. 31 GEORGIA
Sept. 7 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Sept. 19 at NC State
Sept. 28 WAKE FOREST
Oct. 5 at Syracuse
Oct. 12 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 19 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 26 at Maryland
Nov. 2 at Virginia
Nov. 14 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 23 CITADEL
Nov. 30 at South Carolina

DUKE
Aug. 31 N.C. CENTRAL
Sept. 7 at Memphis
Sept. 14 GEORGIA TECH
Sept. 21 PITTSBURGH
Sept. 28 TROY
Oct. 12 NAVY
Oct. 19 at Virginia
Oct. 26 at Virginia Tech
Nov. 9 NC STATE
Nov. 16 MIAMI
Nov. 23 at Wake Forest
Nov. 30 North Carolina

FLORIDA STATE
Sept. 2 at Pittsburgh
Sept. 14 NEVADA
Sept. 21 BETHUNE-COOKMAN
Sept. 28 at Boston College
Oct. 5 MARYLAND
Oct. 19 at Clemson
Oct. 26 NC STATE
Nov. 2 MIAMI
Nov. 9 at Wake Forest
Nov. 16 SYRACUSE
Nov. 23 IDAHO
Nov. 30 at Florida

GEORGIA TECH
Aug. 31 ELON
Sept. 14 at Duke
Sept. 21 NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 26 VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 5 at Miami
Oct. 12 at BYU
Oct. 19 SYRACUSE
Oct. 26 at Virginia
Nov. 2 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 14 at Clemson
Nov. 23 ALABAMA A&M
Nov. 30 GEORGIA

MARYLAND
Aug. 31 FIU
Sept. 7 OLD DOMINION
Sept. 14 at Connecticut
Sept. 21 vs. West Virginia (Baltimore, MD)
Oct. 5 at Florida State
Oct. 12 VIRGINIA
Oct. 19 at Wake Forest
Oct. 26 CLEMSON
Nov. 9 SYRACUSE
Nov. 16 at Virginia Tech
Nov. 23 BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 30 at NC State

MIAMI
Aug. 30 FAU
Sept. 7 FLORIDA
Sept. 21 SAVANNAH STATE
Sept. 28 at South Florida
Oct. 5 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 17 at North Carolina
Oct. 26 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 2 at Florida State
Nov.9 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 16 at Duke
Nov. 23 VIRGINIA
Nov. 29 at Pittsburgh

NORTH CAROLINA
Aug. 29 at South Carolina
Sept. 7 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Sept. 21 at Georgia Tech
Sept. 28 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 5 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 17 MIAMI
Oct. 26 BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 2 at NC State
Nov. 9 VIRGINIA
Nov. 16 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 23 OLD DOMINION
Nov. 30 DUKE

NC STATE
Aug. 31 LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 7 RICHMOND
Sept. 19 CLEMSON
Sept. 28 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 5 at Wake Forest
Oct. 12 SYRACUSE
Oct. 26 at Florida State
Nov. 2 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 9 at Duke
Nov. 16 at Boston College
Nov. 23 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 30 MARYLAND

PITTSBURGH
Sept. 2 FLORIDA STATE
Sept. 14 NEW MEXICO
Sept. 21 at Duke
Sept.28 VIRGINIA
Oct. 12 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 19 OLD DOMINION
Oct. 26 at Navy
Nov. 2 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 9 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 16 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 23 at Syracuse
Nov. 29 MIAMI

SYRACUSE
Aug. 31 vs. Penn State (East Rutherford, NJ)
Sept. 7 at Northwestern
Sept. 14 WAGNER
Sept. 21 TULANE
Oct. 5 CLEMSON
Oct. 12 at NC State
Oct. 19 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 2 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 9 at Maryland
Nov. 16 at Florida State
Nov. 23 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 30 BOSTON COLLEGE

VIRGINIA
Aug. 31 BYU
Sept. 7 OREGON
Sept. 21 VMI
Sept. 28 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 5 BALL STATE
Oct. 12 at Maryland
Oct. 19 DUKE
Oct. 26 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 2 CLEMSON
Nov. 9 at North Carolina
Nov. 23 at Miami
Nov. 30 VIRGINIA TECH

VIRGINIA TECH
Aug. 31 vs. Alabama (Atlanta, GA)
Sept. 7 WESTERN CAROLINA
Sept. 14 at East Carolina
Sept. 21 MARSHALL
Sept. 26 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 5 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 12 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 26 DUKE
Nov. 2 at Boston College
Nov. 9 at Miami
Nov. 16 MARYLAND
Nov. 30 at Virginia

WAKE FOREST
Aug. 29 PRESBYTERIAN
Sept. 6 at Boston College
Sept. 14 ULM
Sept. 21 at Army
Sept. 28 at Clemson
Oct. 5 NC STATE
Oct. 19 MARYLAND
Oct. 26 at Miami
Nov. 2 at Syracuse
Nov. 9 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 23 DUKE
Nov. 30 at Vanderbilt

BIG TEN

ILLINOIS
Aug. 31 SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 7 CINCINNATI
Sept. 14 vs. Washington (Chicago, IL)
Sept. 28 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 5 at Nebraska
Oct. 19 WISCONSIN
Oct. 26 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 2 at Penn State
Nov. 9 at Indiana
Nov. 16 OHIO STATE
Nov. 23 at Purdue
Nov. 30 NORTHWESTERN

INDIANA
Aug. 29 INDIANA STATE
Sept. 7 NAVY
Sept. 14 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 21 MISSOURI
Oct. 5 PENN STATE
Oct. 12 at Michigan State
Oct. 19 at Michigan
Nov. 2 MINNESOTA
Nov. 9 ILLINOIS
Nov. 16 at Wisconsin
Nov. 23 at Ohio State
Nov. 30 PURDUE

IOWA
Aug. 31 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 7 MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 14 at Iowa State
Sept. 21 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 28 at Minnesota
Oct. 5 MICHIGAN STATE
Oct. 19 at Ohio State
Oct. 26 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 2 WISCONSIN
Nov. 9 at Purdue
Nov. 23 MICHIGAN
Nov. 30 at Nebraska

MICHIGAN
Aug. 31 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 7 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 14 AKRON
Sept. 21 at Connecticut
Oct. 5 MINNESOTA
Oct. 12 at Penn State
Oct. 19 INDIANA
Nov. 2 at Michigan State
Nov. 9 NEBRASKA
Nov. 16 at Northwestern
Nov. 23 at Iowa
Nov. 30 OHIO STATE

MICHIGAN STATE
Aug. 30 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 7 SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 14 YOUNGSTOWN STATE
Sept. 21 at Notre Dame
Oct. 5 at Iowa
Oct. 12 INDIANA
Oct. 19 PURDUE
Oct. 26 at Illinois
Nov. 2 MICHIGAN
Nov. 16 at Nebraska
Nov. 23 at Northwestern
Nov. 30 MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA
Aug. 29 UNLV
Sept. 7 at New Mexico State
Sept. 14 WESTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 21 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 28 IOWA
Oct. 5 at Michigan
Oct. 19 at Northwestern
Oct. 26 NEBRASKA
Nov. 2 at Indiana
Nov. 9 PENN STATE
Nov. 23 WISCONSIN
Nov. 30 at Michigan State

NEBRASKA
Aug. 31 WYOMING
Sept. 7 SOUTHERN MISS
Sept. 14 UCLA
Sept. 21 SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
Oct. 5 ILLINOIS
Oct. 12 at Purdue
Oct. 26 at Minnesota
Nov. 2 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 9 at Michigan
Nov. 16 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 23 at Penn State
Nov. 29 IOWA

NORTHWESTERN
Aug. 31 at California
Sept. 7 SYRACUSE
Sept. 14 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 21 MAINE
Oct. 5 OHIO STATE
Oct. 12 at Wisconsin
Oct. 19 MINNESOTA
Oct. 26 at Iowa
Nov. 2 at Nebraska
Nov. 16 MICHIGAN
Nov. 23 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 30 at Illinois

OHIO STATE
Aug. 31 BUFFALO
Sept. 7 SAN DIEGO STATE
Sept. 14 at California
Sept. 21 FLORIDA A&M
Sept. 28 WISCONSIN
Oct. 5 at Northwestern
Oct. 19 IOWA
Oct. 26 PENN STATE
Nov. 2 at Purdue
Nov. 16 at Illinois
Nov. 23 INDIANA
Nov. 30 at Michigan

PENN STATE
Aug. 31 vs. Syracuse (East Rutherford, NJ)
Sept. 7 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 14 UCF
Sept. 21 KENT STATE
Oct. 5 at Indiana
Oct. 12 MICHIGAN
Oct. 26 at Ohio State
Nov. 2 ILLINOIS
Nov. 9 at Minnesota
Nov. 16 PURDUE
Nov. 23 NEBRASKA
Nov. 30 at Wisconsin

PURDUE
Aug. 31 at Cincinnati
Sept. 7 INDIANA STATE
Sept. 14 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 21 at Wisconsin
Sept. 28 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 12 NEBRASKA
Oct. 19 at Michigan State
Nov. 2 OHIO STATE
Nov. 9 IOWA
Nov. 16 at Penn State
Nov. 23 ILLINOIS
Nov. 30 at Indiana

WISCONSIN
Aug. 31 MASSACHUSETTS
Sept. 7 TENNESSEE TECH
Sept. 14 at Arizona State
Sept. 21 PURDUE
Sept. 28 at Ohio State
Oct. 12 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 19 at Illinois
Nov. 2 at Iowa
Nov. 9 BYU
Nov. 16 INDIANA
Nov. 23 at Minnesota
Nov. 30 PENN STATE

BIG 12

BAYLOR
Aug. 31 WOFFORD
Sept. 7 BUFFALO
Sept. 21 ULM
Oct. 5 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 12 at Kansas State
Oct. 19 IOWA STATE
Oct. 26 at Kansas
Nov. 7 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 16 vs. Texas Tech (Arlington, TX)
Nov. 23 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 30 at TCU
Dec. 7 TEXAS

IOWA STATE
Aug. 31 NORTHERN IOWA
Sept. 14 IOWA
Sept. 26 at Tulsa
Oct. 3 TEXAS
Oct. 12 at Texas Tech
Oct. 19 at Baylor
Oct. 26 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 2 at Kansas State
Nov. 9 TCU
Nov. 16 at Oklahoma
Nov. 23 KANSAS
Nov. 29 at West Virginia

KANSAS
Sept. 7 SOUTH DAKOTA
Sept. 14 at Rice
Sept. 21 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 5 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 12 at TCU
Oct. 19 OKLAHOMA
Oct. 26 BAYLOR
Nov. 2 at Texas
Nov. 9 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 16 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 23 at Iowa State
Nov. 30 KANSAS STATE

KANSAS STATE
Aug. 30 NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Sept. 7 LOUISIANA
Sept. 14 MASSACHUSETTS
Sept. 21 at Texas
Oct. 5 at Oklahoma State
Oct. 12 BAYLOR
Oct. 26 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 2 IOWA STATE
Nov. 9 at Texas Tech
Nov. 16 TCU
Nov. 23 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 30 at Kansas

OKLAHOMA
Aug. 31 ULM
Sept. 7 WEST VIRGINIA
Sept. 14 TULSA
Sept. 28 at Notre Dame
Oct. 5 TCU
Oct. 12 vs. Texas (Dallas, TX)
Oct. 19 at Kansas
Oct. 26 TEXAS TECH
Nov. 7 at Baylor
Nov. 16 IOWA STATE
Nov. 23 at Kansas State
Dec. 7 at Oklahoma State

OKLAHOMA STATE
Aug. 31 vs. Mississippi State (Houston, TX)
Sept. 7 at UTSA
Sept. 14 LAMAR
Sept. 28 at West Virginia
Oct. 5 KANSAS STATE

Wrangler

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

Oct. 19 TCU
Oct. 26 at Iowa State
Nov. 2 at Texas Tech
Nov. 9 KANSAS
Nov. 16 at Texas
Nov. 23 BAYLOR
Dec. 7 OKLAHOMA

TCU

Aug. 31 vs. LSU (Arlington, TX)
Sept. 7 S.E. LOUISIANA
Sept. 12 at Texas Tech
Sept. 28 SMU
Oct. 5 at Oklahoma
Oct. 12 KANSAS
Oct. 19 at Oklahoma State
Oct. 26 TEXAS
Nov. 2 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 9 at Iowa State
Nov. 16 at Kansas State
Nov. 30 BAYLOR

TEXAS

Aug. 31 NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 7 at BYU
Sept. 14 OLE MISS
Sept. 21 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 3 at Iowa State
Oct. 12 vs. Oklahoma (Dallas, TX)
Oct. 26 at TCU
Nov. 2 KANSAS
Nov. 9 at West Virginia
Nov. 16 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 28 TEXAS TECH
Dec. 7 at Baylor

TEXAS TECH

Aug. 30 at SMU
Sept. 7 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Sept. 12 TCU
Sept. 21 TEXAS STATE
Oct. 5 at Kansas
Oct. 12 IOWA STATE
Oct. 19 at West Virginia
Oct. 26 at Oklahoma
Nov. 2 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 9 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 16 vs. Baylor (Arlington, TX)
Nov. 28 at Texas

WEST VIRGINIA

Aug. 31 WILLIAM & MARY
Sept. 7 at Oklahoma
Sept. 14 GEORGIA STATE
Sept. 21 vs. Maryland (Baltimore, MD)
Sept. 28 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 5 at Baylor
Oct. 19 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 26 at Kansas State
Nov. 2 at TCU
Nov. 9 TEXAS
Nov. 16 at Kansas
Nov. 29 IOWA STATE

C-USA

EAST CAROLINA

Aug. 31 OLD DOMINION
Sept. 5 FAU
Sept. 14 VIRGINIA TECH
Sept. 28 at North Carolina
Oct. 5 at Middle Tennessee
Oct. 12 at Tulane
Oct. 19 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 2 at FIU
Nov. 9 TULSA
Nov. 16 UAB
Nov. 23 at NC State
Nov. 30 at Marshall

FLORIDA ATLANTIC (FAU)

Aug. 30 at Miami
Sept. 5 at East Carolina
Sept. 14 at South Florida
Sept. 21 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Sept. 28 at Rice
Oct. 5 at UAB
Oct. 12 MARSHALL
Oct. 26 at Auburn
Nov. 2 TULANE
Nov. 16 at Southern Miss
Nov. 23 NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 29 FIU

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL (FIU)

Aug. 31 at Maryland
Sept. 7 UCF
Sept. 14 BETHUNE-COOKMAN
Sept. 21 at Louisville
Oct. 5 at Southern Miss
Oct. 12 UAB
Oct. 26 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 2 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 9 at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 16 at UTEP
Nov. 23 MARSHALL
Nov. 29 at FAU

LOUISIANA TECH

Aug. 31 at NC State
Sept. 7 LAMAR
Sept. 12 TULANE
Sept. 21 at Kansas
Sept. 28 vs. Army (Dallas, TX)
Oct. 5 at UTEP
Oct. 19 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 26 at FIU
Nov. 9 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 16 at Rice
Nov. 23 TULSA
Nov. 30 at UTSA

MARSHALL

Aug. 31 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 7 GARDNER-WEBB
Sept. 14 at Ohio
Sept. 21 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 5 UTSA
Oct. 12 at FAU
Oct. 24 at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 2 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 9 UAB
Nov. 14 at Tulsa
Nov. 23 at FIU
Nov. 30 EAST CAROLINA

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Aug. 29 WESTERN CAROLINA
Sept. 7 at North Carolina
Sept. 14 MEMPHIS
Sept. 21 at FAU
Sept. 27 at BYU
Oct. 5 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 12 at North Texas
Oct. 24 MARSHALL
Nov. 2 at UAB
Nov. 9 FIU
Nov. 23 at Southern Miss
Nov. 30 UTEP

NORTH TEXAS

Aug. 31 IDAHO
Sept. 7 at Ohio
Sept. 14 BALL STATE
Sept. 21 at Georgia
Oct. 5 at Tulane
Oct. 12 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 19 at Louisiana Tech
Oct. 26 at Southern Miss
Oct. 31 RICE
Nov. 9 UTEP
Nov. 23 UTSA
Nov. 30 at Tulsa

RICE

Aug. 31 at Texas A&M
Sept. 14 KANSAS
Sept. 21 vs. Houston (Houston, TX)
Sept. 28 FAU
Oct. 5 at Tulsa
Oct. 12 at UTSA
Oct. 19 at New Mexico State
Oct. 26 UTEP
Nov. 2 at North Texas
Nov. 16 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 23 at UAB
Nov. 30 TULANE

SOUTHERN MISS

Aug. 31 TEXAS STATE
Sept. 7 at Nebraska
Sept. 14 at Arkansas
Sept. 28 at Boise State
Oct. 5 FIU
Oct. 19 at East Carolina
Oct. 26 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 2 at Marshall
Nov. 9 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 16 FAU
Nov. 23 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 30 at UAB

TULANE

Aug. 31 JACKSON STATE
Sept. 7 SOUTH ALABAMA
Sept. 12 at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 21 at Syracuse
Sept. 28 at ULM
Oct. 5 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 12 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 26 TULSA
Nov. 2 at FAU
Nov. 9 at UTSA
Nov. 23 UTEP
Nov. 30 at Rice

TULSA

Aug. 31 at Bowling Green
Sept. 7 COLORADO STATE
Sept. 14 at Oklahoma
Sept. 26 IOWA STATE
Oct. 5 RICE
Oct. 12 at UTEP
Oct. 26 at Tulane
Nov. 2 UTSA
Nov. 9 at East Carolina
Nov. 14 MARSHALL
Nov. 23 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 30 NORTH TEXAS

UAB

Aug. 31 at Troy
Sept. 7 at LSU
Sept. 21 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 28 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 5 FAU
Oct. 12 at FIU
Oct. 26 at UTSA
Nov. 2 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 9 at Marshall
Nov. 16 at East Carolina
Nov. 23 RICE
Nov. 30 SOUTHERN MISS

UTEP

Sept. 7 NEW MEXICO
Sept. 14 at New Mexico State
Sept. 21 UTSA
Sept. 28 at Colorado State
Oct. 5 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 12 TULSA
Oct. 26 at Rice
Nov. 2 at Texas A&M
Nov. 9 at North Texas
Nov. 16 FIU
Nov. 23 at Tulane
Nov. 30 at Middle Tennessee

UTSA

Aug. 31 at New Mexico
Sept. 7 OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 14 at Arizona
Sept. 21 at UTEP
Sept. 28 HOUSTON
Oct. 5 at Marshall
Oct. 12 RICE
Oct. 26 UAB
Nov. 2 at Tulsa
Nov. 9 TULANE
Nov. 23 at North Texas
Nov. 30 LOUISIANA TECH

I-A INDEPENDENTS

ARMY

Aug. 30 MORGAN STATE
Sept. 7 at Ball State
Sept. 14 STANFORD
Sept. 21 WAKE FOREST
Sept. 28 vs. LOUISIANA TECH (Dallas, TX)
Oct. 5 at Boston College
Oct. 12 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 19 at Temple
Nov. 2 at Air Force
Nov. 9 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 30 at Hawaii
Dec. 14 vs. Navy (Philadelphia, PA)

BYU

Aug. 31 at Virginia
Sept. 7 TEXAS
Sept. 21 UTAH
Sept. 27 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 4 at Utah State
Oct. 12 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 19 at Houston
Oct. 26 BOISE STATE
Nov. 9 at Wisconsin
Nov. 16 IDAHO STATE
Nov. 23 at Notre Dame
Nov. 30 at Nevada

IDAHO

Aug. 31 at North Texas
Sept. 7 at Wyoming
Sept. 14 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 21 at Washington State
Sept. 28 TEMPLE
Oct. 5 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 12 at Arkansas State
Oct. 26 at Ole Miss
Nov. 2 TEXAS STATE
Nov. 9 OLD DOMINION
Nov. 23 at Florida State
Nov. 30 at New Mexico State

NAVY

Sept. 7 at Indiana
Sept. 14 DELAWARE
Sept. 28 at Western Kentucky
Oct. 5 AIR FORCE
Oct. 12 at Duke
Oct. 19 at Toledo
Oct. 26 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 2 at Notre Dame
Nov. 9 HAWAII
Nov. 16 SOUTH ALABAMA
Nov. 23 at San Jose State
Dec. 14 vs. Army (Philadelphia, PA)

NEW MEXICO STATE

Aug. 31 at Texas
Sept. 7 MINNESOTA
Sept. 14 UTEP
Sept. 21 at UCLA
Sept. 28 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 5 at New Mexico
Oct. 19 RICE
Oct. 26 ABILENE CHRISTIAN
Nov. 2 at Louisiana
Nov. 9 BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 23 at FAU
Nov. 30 IDAHO

NOTRE DAME

Aug. 31 TEMPLE
Sept. 7 at Michigan
Sept. 14 at Purdue
Sept. 21 MICHIGAN STATE
Sept. 28 OKLAHOMA
Oct. 5 vs. Arizona State (Arlington, TX)
Oct. 19 USC
Oct. 26 at Air Force
Nov. 2 NAVY
Nov. 9 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 23 BYU
Nov. 30 at Stanford

MAC

AKRON

Aug. 29 at UCF
Sept. 7 JAMES MADISON
Sept. 14 at Michigan
Sept. 21 LOUISIANA
Sept. 28 at Bowling Green
Oct. 5 OHIO
Oct. 12 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 19 at Miami (OH)
Oct. 26 BALL STATE
Nov. 2 KENT STATE
Nov. 16 at Massachusetts
Nov. 29 TOLEDO

BALL STATE

Aug. 29 ILLINOIS STATE
Sept. 7 ARMY
Sept. 14 at North Texas
Sept. 21 at Eastern Michigan
Sept. 28 TOLEDO
Oct. 5 at Virginia
Oct. 12 KENT STATE
Oct. 19 at Western Michigan
Oct. 26 at Akron
Nov. 6 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 13 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 29 MIAMI (OH)

BOWLING GREEN

Aug. 29 TULSA
Sept. 7 at Kent State
Sept. 14 at Indiana
Sept. 21 MURRAY STATE
Sept. 28 AKRON
Oct. 5 MASSACHUSETTS
Oct. 12 at Mississippi State
Oct. 26 TOLEDO
Nov. 5 at Miami (OH)
Nov. 12 OHIO
Nov. 23 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 29 at Buffalo

BUFFALO

Aug. 31 at Ohio State
Sept. 7 at Baylor
Sept. 14 STONY BROOK
Sept. 28 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 5 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 12 at Western Michigan
Oct. 19 MASSACHUSETTS
Oct. 26 at Kent State
Nov. 5 OHIO
Nov. 12 at Toledo
Nov. 19 at Miami (OH)
Nov. 29 BOWLING GREEN

CENTRAL MICHIGAN

Aug. 31 at Michigan
Sept. 7 NEW HAMPSHIRE
Sept. 14 at UNLV
Sept. 21 TOLEDO
Sept. 28 at NC State
Oct. 5 at Miami (OH)
Oct. 12 at Ohio
Oct. 19 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 6 at Ball State
Nov. 16 at Western Michigan
Nov. 23 MASSACHUSETTS
Nov. 29 EASTERN MICHIGAN

EASTERN MICHIGAN

Aug. 31 HOWARD
Sept. 7 at Penn State
Sept. 14 at Rutgers
Sept. 21 BALL STATE
Oct. 5 at Buffalo
Oct. 12 at Army
Oct. 19 OHIO
Oct. 26 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 2 at Toledo
Nov. 9 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 23 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 29 at Central Michigan

KENT STATE

Aug. 29 LIBERTY
Sept. 7 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 14 at LSU
Sept. 21 at Penn State
Sept. 28 at Western Michigan
Oct. 5 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 12 at Ball State
Oct. 19 at South Alabama
Oct. 26 BUFFALO
Nov. 2 at Akron
Nov. 13 MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 19 at OHIO

MASSACHUSETTS

Aug. 31 at Wisconsin
Sept. 7 MAINE
Sept. 14 at Kansas State
Sept. 21 VANDERBILT
Oct. 5 at Bowling Green
Oct. 12 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 19 at Buffalo
Oct. 26 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 2 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 16 AKRON
Nov. 23 at Central Michigan
Nov. 29 at Ohio

MIAMI (OH)

Aug. 31 at Marshall
Sept. 7 at Kentucky
Sept. 21 CINCINNATI
Sept. 28 at Illinois
Oct. 5 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 12 at Massachusetts
Oct. 19 AKRON
Oct. 26 at Ohio
Nov. 5 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 13 at Kent State
Nov. 19 BUFFALO
Nov. 29 at Ball State

NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Aug. 31 at Iowa
Sept. 14 at Idaho
Sept. 21 EASTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 28 at Purdue
Oct. 5 at Kent State
Oct. 12 AKRON
Oct. 19 at Central Michigan
Oct. 26 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 2 at Massachusetts
Nov. 13 BALL STATE
Nov. 20 at Toledo
Nov. 26 WESTERN MICHIGAN

OHIO

Aug. 31 at Louisville
Sept. 7 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 14 MARSHALL
Sept. 21 AUSTIN PEAY
Oct. 5 at Akron
Oct. 12 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 19 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 26 MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 5 at Buffalo
Nov. 12 at Bowling Green
Nov. 19 KENT STATE
Nov. 29 MASSACHUSETTS

TOLEDO

Aug. 31 at Florida
Sept. 7 at Missouri
Sept. 14 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 21 at Central Michigan
Sept. 28 at Ball State
Oct. 5 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 19 NAVY
Oct. 26 at Bowling Green
Nov. 2 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 12 BUFFALO
Nov. 20 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 29 at Akron

WESTERN MICHIGAN

Aug. 30 at Michigan State
Sept. 7 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 14 at Northwestern
Sept. 21 at Iowa
Sept. 28 KENT STATE
Oct. 5 at Toledo
Oct. 12 BUFFALO
Oct. 19 BALL STATE
Oct. 26 at Massachusetts
Nov. 9 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 16 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 26 at Northern Illinois

MOUNTAIN WEST

AIR FORCE

Aug. 31 COLGATE
Sept. 7 UTAH STATE
Sept. 13 at Boise State
Sept. 21 WYOMING
Sept. 28 at Nevada
Oct. 5 at Navy
Oct. 10 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 26 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 2 ARMY
Nov. 8 at New Mexico
Nov. 21 UNLV
Nov. 30 at Colorado State

BOISE STATE

Aug. 31 at Washington
Sept. 7 TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Sept. 13 AIR FORCE
Sept. 20 at Fresno State
Sept. 28 SOUTHERN MISS
Oct. 12 at Utah State
Oct. 19 NEVADA
Oct. 25 at BYU
Nov. 2 at Colorado State
Nov. 16 WYOMING
Nov. 23 at San Diego State
Nov. 30 NEW MEXICO

COLORADO STATE

Sept. 1 COLORADO
Sept. 7 at Tulsa
Sept. 14 CAL POLY
Sept. 21 at Alabama
Sept. 28 UTEP
Oct. 12 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 19 at Wyoming
Oct. 26 at Hawaii
Nov. 2 BOISE STATE
Nov. 9 NEVADA
Nov. 16 at New Mexico
Nov. 23 at Utah State
Nov. 30 AIR FORCE

FRESNO STATE

Aug. 29 RUTGERS
Sept. 7 CAL POLY
Sept. 14 at Colorado
Sept. 20 BOISE STATE
Sept. 28 at Hawaii
Oct. 5 at Idaho
Oct. 19 UNLV
Oct. 26 at San Diego State
Nov. 2 NEVADA
Nov. 9 at Wyoming
Nov. 23 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 29 at San Jose State

HAWAII

Aug. 29 USC
Sept. 7 at Oregon State
Sept. 21 at Nevada
Sept. 28 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 5 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 12 at UNLV

Wrangler

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

Oct. 26 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 2 at Utah State
Nov. 9 at Navy
Nov. 16 SAN DIEGO STATE
Nov. 23 at Wyoming
Nov. 30 ARMY

NEVADA

Aug. 31 at UCLA
Sept. 7 UC DAVIS
Sept. 14 at Florida State
Sept. 21 HAWAII
Sept. 28 AIR FORCE
Oct. 4 at San Diego State
Oct. 19 at Boise State
Oct. 26 UNLV
Nov. 2 at Fresno State
Nov. 9 at Colorado State
Nov. 16 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 30 BYU

NEW MEXICO

Aug. 31 UTSA
Sept. 7 at UTEP
Sept. 14 at Pittsburgh
Sept. 28 UNLV
Oct. 5 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 12 at Wyoming
Oct. 19 UTAH STATE
Nov. 2 at San Diego State
Nov. 8 AIR FORCE
Nov. 16 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 23 at Fresno State
Nov. 30 at Boise State

SAN DIEGO STATE

Aug. 31 EASTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 7 at Ohio State
Sept. 21 OREGON STATE
Sept. 28 at New Mexico State
Oct. 4 NEVADA
Oct. 10 at Air Force
Oct. 26 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 2 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 9 at San Jose State
Nov. 16 at Hawaii
Nov. 23 BOISE STATE
Nov. 30 at UNLV

SAN JOSE STATE

Aug. 29 SACRAMENTO STATE
Sept. 7 at Stanford
Sept. 21 at Minnesota
Sept. 27 UTAH STATE
Oct. 5 at Hawaii
Oct. 12 at Colorado State
Oct. 26 WYOMING
Nov. 2 at UNLV
Nov. 9 SAN DIEGO STATE
Nov. 16 at Nevada
Nov. 23 NAVY
Nov. 29 FRESNO STATE

UNLV

Aug. 29 at Minnesota
Sept. 7 ARIZONA
Sept. 14 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 21 WESTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 28 at New Mexico
Oct. 2 HAWAII
Oct. 19 at Fresno State
Oct. 26 at Nevada
Nov. 2 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 9 UTAH STATE
Nov. 21 at Air Force
Nov. 30 SAN DIEGO STATE

UTAH STATE

Aug. 29 at Utah
Sept. 7 at Air Force
Sept. 14 WEBER STATE
Sept. 21 at USC
Sept. 27 at San Jose State
Oct. 4 BYU
Oct. 12 BOISE STATE
Oct. 19 at New Mexico
Nov. 2 HAWAII
Nov. 9 at UNLV
Nov. 23 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 30 WYOMING

WYOMING

Aug. 31 at Nebraska
Sept. 7 IDAHO
Sept. 14 NORTHERN COLORADO
Sept. 21 at Air Force
Sept. 28 at Texas State
Oct. 12 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 19 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 26 at San Jose State
Nov. 9 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 16 at Boise State
Nov. 23 HAWAII
Nov. 30 at Utah State

PAC-12

ARIZONA

Aug. 30 NORTHERN ARIZONA
Sept. 7 at UNLV
Sept. 14 UTSA
Sept. 28 at Washington
Oct. 10 at USC
Oct. 19 UTAH
Oct. 26 at Colorado
Nov. 2 at California
Nov. 9 UCLA
Nov. 16 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 23 OREGON
Nov. 30 at Arizona State

ARIZONA STATE

Sept. 5 SACRAMENTO STATE
Sept. 14 WISCONSIN
Sept. 21 at Stanford
Sept. 28 USC
Oct. 5 vs. Notre Dame (Arlington, TX)
Oct. 12 COLORADO
Oct. 19 WASHINGTON
Oct. 31 at Washington State
Nov. 9 at Utah
Nov. 16 OREGON STATE
Nov. 23 at UCLA
Nov. 30 ARIZONA

CALIFORNIA

Aug. 31 NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 7 PORTLAND STATE
Sept. 14 OHIO STATE
Sept. 28 at Oregon
Oct. 5 WASHINGTON STATE
Oct. 12 at UCLA
Oct. 19 OREGON STATE
Oct. 26 at Washington
Nov. 2 ARIZONA
Nov. 9 USC
Nov. 16 at Colorado
Nov. 23 at Stanford

COLORADO

Aug. 31 at Colorado State
Sept. 7 CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Sept. 14 FRESNO STATE
Sept. 28 at Oregon State
Oct. 5 OREGON
Oct. 12 at Arizona State
Oct. 26 ARIZONA
Nov. 2 at UCLA
Nov. 9 at Washington
Nv. 16 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 23 USC
Nov. 30 at Utah

OREGON

Aug. 31 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 7 at Virginia
Sept. 14 TENNESSEE
Sept. 28 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 5 at Colorado
Oct. 12 at Washington
Oct. 19 WASHINGTON STATE
Oct. 26 UCLA
Nov. 7 at Stanford
Nov. 16 UTAH
Nov. 23 at Arizona
Nov. 29 OREGON STATE

OREGON STATE

Aug. 31 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 7 HAWAII
Sept. 14 at Utah
Sept. 21 at San Diego State
Sept. 28 COLORADO
Oct. 12 at Washington State
Oct. 19 at California
Oct. 26 STANFORD
Nov. 1 USC
Nov. 16 at Arizona State
Nov. 23 WASHINGTON
Nov. 29 at Oregon

STANFORD

Sept. 7 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 14 at Army
Sept. 21 ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 28 vs. Washington State (Seattle, WA)
Oct. 5 WASHINGTON
Oct. 12 at Utah
Oct. 19 UCLA
Oct. 26 at Oregon State
Nov. 7 OREGON
Nov. 16 at USC
Nov. 23 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 30 NOTRE DAME

UCLA

Aug. 31 NEVADA
Sept. 14 at Nebraska
Sept. 21 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 3 at Utah
Oct. 12 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 19 at Stanford
Oct. 26 at Oregon
Nov. 2 COLORADO
Nov. 9 at Arizona
Nov. 15 WASHINGTON
Nov. 23 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 30 at USC

USC

Aug. 29 at Hawaii
Sept. 7 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 14 BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 21 UTAH STATE
Sept. 28 at Arizona State
Oct. 10 ARIZONA
Oct. 19 at Notre Dame
Oct. 26 UTAH
Nov. 1 at Oregon State
Nov. 9 at California
Nov. 16 STANFORD
Nov. 23 at Colorado
Nov. 30 UCLA

UTAH

Aug. 29 UTAH STATE
Sept. 9 WEBER STATE
Sept. 14 OREGON STATE
Sept. 21 at BYU
Oct. 3 UCLA
Oct. 12 STANFORD
Oct. 19 at Arizona
Oct. 26 at USC
Nov. 9 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 16 at Oregon
Nov. 23 at Washington State
Nov. 30 COLORADO

WASHINGTON

Aug. 31 BOISE STATE
Sept. 14 vs. Illinois (Chicago, IL)
Sept. 21 IDAHO STATE
Sept. 28 ARIZONA
Oct. 5 at Stanford
Oct. 12 OREGON
Oct. 19 at Arizona State
Oct. 26 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 9 COLORADO
Nov. 15 at UCLA
Nov. 23 at Oregon State
Nov. 29 WASHINGTON STATE

WASHINGTON STATE

Aug. 31 at Auburn
Sept. 7 at USC
Sept. 14 SOUTHERN UTAH
Sept. 21 IDAHO
Sept. 28 vs. Stanford (Seattle, WA)
Oct. 5 at California
Oct. 12 OREGON STATE
Oct. 19 at Oregon
Oct. 31 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 16 at Arizona
Nov. 23 UTAH
Nov. 29 at Washington

SEC

ALABAMA

Aug. 31 vs. Virginia Tech (Atlanta, GA)
Sept. 14 at Texas A&M
Sept. 21 COLORADO STATE
Sept. 28 OLE MISS
Oct. 5 GEORGIA STATE
Oct. 12 at Kentucky
Oct. 19 ARKANSAS
Oct. 26 TENNESSEE
Nov. 9 LSU
Nov. 16 at Mississippi State
Nov. 23 CHATTANOOGA
Nov. 30 at Auburn

ARKANSAS

Aug. 31 LOUISIANA
Sept. 7 vs. Samford (Little Rock, AR)
Sept. 14 SOUTHERN MISS
Sept. 21 at Rutgers
Sept. 28 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 5 at Florida
Oct. 12 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 19 at Alabama
Nov. 2 AUBURN
Nov. 9 at Ole Miss
Nov. 23 vs. Mississippi State (Little Rock, AR)
Nov. 30 at LSU

AUBURN

Aug. 31 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 7 ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 14 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 21 at LSU
Oct. 5 OLE MISS
Oct. 12 WESTERN CAROLINA
Oct. 19 at Texas A&M
Oct. 26 FAU
Nov. 2 at Arkansas
Nov. 9 at Tennessee
Nov. 16 GEORGIA
Nov. 30 ALABAMA

FLORIDA

Aug. 31 TOLEDO
Sept. 7 at Miami
Sept. 21 TENNESSEE
Sept. 28 at Kentucky
Oct. 5 ARKANSAS
Oct. 12 at LSU
Oct. 19 at Missouri
Nov. 2 vs. Georgia (Jacksonville, FL)
Nov. 9 VANDERBILT
Nov. 16 at South Carolina
Nov. 23 GEORGIA SOUTHERN
Nov. 30 FLORIDA STATE

GEORGIA

Aug. 31 at Clemson
Sept. 7 SOUTH CAROLINA
Sept. 21 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 28 LSU
Oct. 5 at Tennessee
Oct. 12 MISSOURI
Oct. 19 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 2 vs. Florida (Jacksonville, FL)
Nov. 9 APPALACHIAN STATE
Nov. 16 at Auburn
Nov. 23 KENTUCKY
Nov. 30 at Georgia Tech

KENTUCKY

Aug. 31 vs. Western Kentucky (Nashville, TN)
Sept. 7 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 14 LOUISVILLE
Sept. 28 FLORIDA
Oct. 5 at South Carolina
Oct. 12 ALABAMA
Oct. 26 at Mississippi State
Nov. 2 ALABAMA STATE
Nov. 9 MISSOURI
Nov. 16 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 23 at Georgia
Nov. 30 TENNESSEE

LSU

Aug. 31 vs. TCU (Arlington, TX)
Sept. 7 UAB
Sept. 14 KENT STATE
Sept. 21 AUBURN
Sept. 28 at Georgia
Oct. 5 at Mississippi State
Oct. 12 FLORIDA
Oct. 19 at Ole Miss
Oct. 26 FURMAN
Nov. 9 at Alabama
Nov. 23 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 30 ARKANSAS

OLE MISS

Aug. 29 at Vanderbilt
Sept. 7 SOUTHEAST MISSOURI
Sept. 14 at Texas
Sept. 28 at Alabama
Oct. 5 at Auburn
Oct. 12 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 19 LSU
Oct. 26 IDAHO
Nov. 9 ARKANSAS
Nov. 16 TROY
Nov. 23 MISSOURI
Nov. 28 at Mississippi State

MISSISSIPPI STATE

Aug. 31 vs. Oklahoma State (Houston, TX)
Sept. 7 ALCORN STATE
Sept. 14 at Auburn
Sept. 21 TROY
Oct. 5 LSU
Oct. 12 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 24 KENTUCKY
Nov. 2 at South Carolina
Nov. 9 at Texas A&M
Nov. 16 ALABAMA
Nov. 23 vs. Arkansas (Little Rock, AR)
Nov. 28 OLE MISS

MISSOURI

Aug. 31 MURRAY STATE
Sept. 7 TOLEDO
Sept. 21 at Indiana
Sept. 28 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 5 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 12 at Georgia
Oct. 19 FLORIDA
Oct. 26 SOUTH CAROLINA
Nov. 2 TENNESSEE
Nov. 9 at Kentucky
Nov. 23 at Ole Miss
Nov. 30 TEXAS A&M

SOUTH CAROLINA

Aug. 29 NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 7 at Georgia
Sept. 14 VANDERBILT
Sept. 28 at UCF
Oct. 5 KENTUCKY
Oct. 12 at Arkansas
Oct. 19 at Tennessee
Oct. 26 at Missouri
Nov. 2 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Nov. 16 FLORIDA
Nov. 23 COASTAL CAROLINA
Nov. 30 CLEMSON

TENNESSEE

Aug. 31 AUSTIN PEAY
Sept. 7 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 14 at Oregon
Sept. 21 at Florida
Sept. 28 SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 5 GEORGIA
Oct. 19 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 26 at Alabama
Nov. 2 at Missouri
Nov. 9 AUBURN
Nov. 23 VANDERBILT
Nov. 30 at Kentucky

TEXAS A&M

Aug. 31 RICE
Sept. 7 SAM HOUSTON STATE
Sept. 14 ALABAMA
Sept. 21 SMU
Sept. 28 at Arkansas
Oct. 12 at Ole Miss
Oct. 19 AUBURN
Oct. 26 VANDERBILT
Nov. 2 UTEP
Nov. 9 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Nov. 23 at LSU
Nov. 30 at Missouri

VANDERBILT

Aug. 29 OLE MISS
Sept. 7 AUSTIN PEAY
Sept. 14 at South Carolina
Sept. 21 at Massachusetts
Sept. 28 UAB
Oct. 5 MISSOURI
Oct. 19 GEORGIA
Oct. 26 at Texas A&M
Nov. 9 at Florida
Nov. 16 KENTUCKY
Nov. 23 at Tennessee
Nov. 30 WAKE FOREST

SUN BELT

ARKANSAS STATE

Aug. 31 ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF
Sept. 7 at Auburn
Sept. 12 TROY
Sept. 21 at Memphis
Sept. 28 at Missouri
Oct. 12 IDAHO
Oct. 22 LOUISIANA
Nov. 2 at South Alabama
Nov. 9 at ULM
Nov. 16 TEXAS STATE
Nov. 23 GEORGIA STATE
Nov. 30 at Western Kentucky

GEORGIA STATE

Aug. 30 SAMFORD
Sept. 7 CHATTANOOGA
Sept. 14 at West Virginia
Sept. 21 JACKSONVILLE STATE
Oct. 5 at Alabama
Oct. 12 TROY
Oct. 19 at Texas State
Oct. 26 at ULM
Nov. 2 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 16 LOUISIANA
Nov. 23 at Arkansas State
Nov. 30 SOUTH ALABAMA

LOUISIANA

Aug. 31 at Arkansas
Sept. 7 at Kansas State
Sept. 14 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 21 at Akron
Oct. 5 TEXAS STATE
Oct. 15 at Western Kentucky
Oct. 22 at Arkansas State
Nov. 2 NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 7 TROY
Nov. 16 at Georgia State
Nov. 30 ULM
Dec. 7 at South Alabama

LOUISIANA-MONROE (ULM)

Aug. 31 at Oklahoma
Sept. 7 GRAMBLING STATE
Sept. 14 at Wake Forest
Sept. 21 at Baylor
Sept. 28 TULANE
Oct. 3 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 12 at Texas State
Oct. 26 GEORGIA STATE
Oct. 31 at Troy
Nov. 9 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 23 SOUTH ALABAMA
Nov. 30 at Louisiana

SOUTH ALABAMA

Aug. 29 SOUTHERN UTAH
Sept. 7 at Tulane
Sept. 14 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 28 at Tennessee
Oct. 5 at Troy
Oct. 19 KENT STATE
Oct. 26 at Texas State
Nov. 2 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 16 at Navy
Nov. 23 ULM
Nov. 30 at Georgia State
Dec. 7 LOUISIANA

TEXAS STATE

Aug. 31 at Southern Miss
Sept. 7 PRAIRIE VIEW A&M
Sept. 21 at Texas Tech
Sept. 28 WYOMING
Oct. 5 at Louisiana
Oct. 12 ULM
Oct. 19 GEORGIA STATE
Oct. 26 SOUTH ALABAMA
Nov. 2 at Idaho
Nov. 16 at Arkansas State
Nov. 23 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 29 at Troy

TROY

Aug. 31 UAB
Sept. 7 SAVANNAH STATE
Sept. 12 at Arkansas State
Sept. 21 at Mississippi State
Sept. 28 at Duke
Oct. 5 SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 12 at Georgia State
Oct. 26 at Western Kentucky
Oct. 31 ULM
Nov. 7 at Louisiana
Nov. 16 at Ole Miss
Nov. 29 TEXAS STATE

WESTERN KENTUCKY

Aug. 31 vs. Kentucky (Nashville, TN)
Sept. 7 at Tennessee
Sept. 14 at South Alabama
Sept. 21 MORGAN STATE
Sept. 28 NAVY
Oct. 3 at ULM
Oct. 16 LOUISIANA
Oct. 26 TROY
Nov. 2 at Georgia State
Nov. 9 at Army
Nov. 23 at Texas State
Nov. 30 ARKANSAS STATE

NATIONAL RECRUITING

By Jake Rowe
UGASports.com/Rivals.com

1 Alabama

THE PARTICULARS: QB-2, RB-4, WR-3, TE-1, OL-4, DE-3, DT-2, LB-2, DB-4

THE BUZZ: Alabama followed two consecutive national championships with another top recruiting class. The future couldn't be much brighter in Tuscaloosa as the Crimson Tide filled needs with elite talent yet again.

Nick Saban and company cleaned up at running back by bringing in four Rivals100 prospects in **Derrick Henry**, **Alvin Kamara**, **Altee Tenpenny** and **Tyren Jones.**

As if that compilation of offensive talent isn't scary enough, Saban added four offensive linemen led by in-state standout **Grant Hill** and left the state to sign two playmaking receivers, **Raheem Falkins** and **Robert Foster**. **OJ Howard**, who enrolled in January, is the top-ranked tight end in the country.

Alabama also reloaded on the defensive side of the ball with a couple of Yellow Hammer State signees up front, **Darius Page** and **Dee Liner**.

This class wasn't without some drama as defensive tackle **A'Shawn Robinson**, from Fort Worth (Tex.) Arlington Heights, chose Alabama over Texas and linebacker **Reuben Foster**, from Auburn (Ala.) Auburn, eventually decided to make his home in Tuscaloosa after being committed to both Auburn and Alabama previously in the process.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this class for Saban is that Alabama went into 11 states to bring in its 25 signees.

2 Ohio State

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-3, TE-1, OL-2, DE-3, DT-3, LB-3, DB-5, ATH-1

THE BUZZ: Urban Meyer's first full recruiting cycle in Columbus was as good as it gets. The Buckeyes staff signed prospects from Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, California and Florida.

The class is headlined by a couple of out-of-state five-stars in defensive back **Vonn Bell**, who was dominant in the Under Armour All-American game, and freakishly talented linebacker **Mike Mitchell**.

Those two have a great chance to contribute and do so early, but the most impactful signee in this class for Ohio State could be **Jalin Marshall**. Marshall can line up at a number of different positions on offense and be a major factor in the return game.

Defensive line was a priority for the Buckeyes in 2013, and the OSU staff hit a home run with six signees at end and tackle. **Tyquan Lewis** is a fierce edge-rusher, while **Joey Bosa** is a complete defensive end that can harass the quarterback and stop the run. Also keep an eye on a couple of four-star run stuffers at defensive tackle in **Michael Hill** and **Billy Price**.

In addition to Bell at defensive back, the Buckeye defensive staff was also able to sign two more Rivals100 prospects in **Eli Apple** and **Cameron Burrows** in the secondary.

3 Notre Dame

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-4, TE-3, OL-5, DE-1, DT-1, LB-3, DB-4

THE BUZZ: Notre Dame played in the BCS National Championship Game in Brian Kelly's third season in South Bend, and it also pulled in a top recruiting class just a few weeks later.

Kelly added a couple of playmakers at running back where five-star prospect **Greg Bryant** and four-star standout **Tarean Folston** inked with the Fighting Irish. Bryant had a number of top tier SEC schools in hot pursuit, and Folston eschewed Auburn late in the process.

In an effort to replace star tight end Tyler Eifert, the Irish signed three prospects at the position with Florida native **Mike Heuerman**, at 6-4, 220 pounds, having the biggest upside of the group.

A couple of prospects with excellent pedigrees will also be wearing the gold helmets at the next level in wide receivers **Torii Hunter Jr.**, son of Detroit Tigers outfielder Torii Hunter, and **Corey Robinson**, son of NBA great David Robinson.

On defense, Notre Dame's class is star-studded with a five-star prospect at each level. Defensive tackle **Eddie Vanderdoes** and defensive back **Max Redfield** both chose the Irish after being committed to USC for part of the process, while linebacker **Jaylon Smith** committed to Kelly's crew in June and never looked back.

4 Florida

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-5, OL-5, DE-3, DT-4, LB-4, DB-4, K-1

THE BUZZ: Will Muschamp's squad took a big step in his second season at Florida, and the staff brought in an elite group of talent to match.

The son of former Gators and Jacksonville Jaguars running back Fred Taylor, **Kelvin Taylor**, was Florida's top signee at running back, and four-star prospects **Demarcus Robinson**, **Ahmad Fulwood** and **Alvin Bailey** all chose UF over offers from other elite programs in the Southeast.

On the offensive line, Florida got immediate help in the form of mammoth JUCO **Trenton Brown** out of Georgia Military College, and snagged four other high three-star prospects to develop for the future.

On defense, Florida got quantity and quality at every level. **Caleb Brantley** and **Jaynard Bostwick** are a couple of Rivals250 defensive tackles who join defensive ends **Joey Ivie** and **Jordan Sherit** to give the Gators an impressive class on the defensive front.

At linebacker, Muschamp's staff brought in an impressive haul that included five-star Pennsylvania native **Alex Anzalone,** who flipped from Notre Dame just days before he was set to enroll early.

Cornerback **Vernon Hargreaves III** is the star of the class for the Gators and was arguably the best player to take the field in either high school all-star game in January.

5 Michigan

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-3, TE-2, OL-7, DE-2, DT-2, LB-2, DB-6

THE BUZZ: Michigan and second year coach Brady Hoke got off to a fast start in recruiting with several commitments in the spring, and finished with one of the top classes in the country for 2013.

The Wolverines grabbed stars at both quarterback and running back with left-handed gunslinger **Shane Morris** and five-star playmaker **Derrick Green** out of Virginia.

Green chose the Wolverines late in the process over a number of big-time programs, and in doing so he opted to join a class loaded with talented offensive linemen. Michigan signed seven total prospects on the offensive front, with five of those being ranked four-stars.

Hoke and company also added a top playmaker at the tight end position in Ohio native **Jake Butt**, who chose the Maize and Blue over dozens of offers from schools across the country.

Defensive tackle **Henry Poggi**, from Baltimore (Md.) Gilman School, headlines the class on defense and is one of the most versatile and explosive defensive linemen in the country.

Ben Gedeon and **Mike McCray** are a couple of athletic linebackers that inked with the Wolverines and they join defensive backs **Ross Douglas**, **Jourdan Lewis** and **Delano Hill,** who all have the talent to contribute in Ann Arbor right away.

6 LSU

THE PARTICULARS: QB-2, WR-4, TE-2, OL-4, DE-5, DT-2, LB-3, DB-4

THE BUZZ: LSU was hit harder by early entrees to the NFL Draft than any other team in the country for 2013, but it hauled in a recruiting class that should allow Les Miles' squad to reload.

The Tigers signed two tremendously talented quarterbacks in **Hayden Rettig** and **Anthony Jennings**, and both bring different skill sets to Baton Rouge.

Surrounding those quarterbacks with talent at wide receiver is an area in which LSU flourished for 2013, signing three four-star pass catchers in **John Diarse**, **Quantavius Leslie** and **Kevin Spears**. Miles and company also signed two ultra-talented offensive linemen in **Ethan Pocic** and **Josh Boutte**.

It comes as no surprise that the LSU coaching staff pulled in elite talent on the defensive line with defensive ends **Frank Herron** and **Tashawn Bower** to go with North Carolina native **Greg Gilmore** at defensive tackle.

Kendell Beckwith is listed as an athlete but will start out at linebacker in Baton Rouge and chose LSU over Alabama late in January. Cornerback **Tre'Davious White** is ranked as a top-20 player in the country and is plenty talented enough to earn major snaps right away.

7 Ole Miss

THE PARTICULARS: QB-2, RB-4, WR-5, TE-3, OL-3, DE-1, DT-3, LB-2, DB-4

THE BUZZ: Hugh Freeze and the Ole Miss coaching staff shocked the college football world with one of the top recruiting classes in the country.

The Rebels went into Georgia to get the nation's No. 1 prospect in defensive end **Robert Nkemdiche**, ventured into Illinois and Florida to get wide receiver **Laquon Treadwell** and pulled offensive tackle **Laremy Tunsil** out of Florida. Both Tunsil and Treadwell were ranked as the top players at their respective positions.

Freeze was also able to bring a couple of physically talented quarterbacks to run his up-tempo spread system in **Ryan Buchanan** and **Devante Kincaid**. Freeze was also able to use his strong connection to the Memphis area to land a couple of four-star running backs in **Mark Dodson Jr.** and **Jordan Wilkins**.

Rivals250 offensive tackle **Austin Golson**, who was committed to Florida State for part of the process, will join Tunsil to form a talented offensive tackle combo.

On defense, Nkemdiche will get most of the pub, but the defensive backfield got a major boost in talent with the addition of stud safety **Antonio Conner**, who chose the Rebels over major SEC offers, and JUCO cornerback **Nickolas Brassell**.

JUCO defensive tackle **Lavon Hooks** had his pick of schools to attend and will give the Rebels defensive line a boost as soon as he sets foot on campus.

8T UCLA

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, WR-4, OL-7, DE-1, DT-1, LB-5, DB-4, K-1

THE BUZZ: Jim Mora's first full recruiting cycle in Westwood was a highly successful one.

UCLA went all the way to the East Coast to land Army All-American quarterback **Asiantii Woulard**, who could be a big playmaker in the Bruins offense going forward.

Mora was also able to give Woulard a couple of big, physical weapons at receiver with **Eldridge Massington** and **Thomas Duarte**.

Offensive line was a position of emphasis in this class for the Bruins as the staff decided to take seven prospects at the position. Memphis native **Christian Morris**, who has the potential to be a star at either tackle position, headlines the group.

As impressive as the prospects are on the offensive side of the ball, the defensive side may hold even more talent. It was a small class on the defensive front as UCLA only signed one defensive tackle in **Kenneth Clark** and one defensive end in former USC commitment **Kyle Fitts**, but both are extremely talented.

The linebacker haul, however, is extremely impressive. Washington native **Myles Jack** is a physical specimen who can rush the passer or play in space. **Deon Hollins Jr.** will join Jack in the second level of UCLA's defense, and he is an explosive playmaker as well.

Mora, a former defensive back himself, also brought in top talent at his old position with another former USC commitment, **Tahaan Goodman**, and star safety **Priest Willis**.

8T Auburn

THE PARTICULARS: QB-3, RB-4, WR-3, OL-2, DE-2, DT-2, LB-2, DB-4, K-1

THE BUZZ: When you consider Auburn went through a coaching change immediately after the 2012 season, this class could be the most impressive in the country.

Guz Malzahn and staff hit the ground running on The Plains, and picked up a plethora of talent on both sides of the ball.

Three prospects will get a shot at the quarterback position in **Jeremy Johnson**, **Nick Marshall** and **Jason Smith**, and Johnson has a chance to be special.

At running back, Malzahn went after speed and power. JUCO star **Cameron Artis-Payne** will likely be an impact player right away as a power runner, with **Johnathan "Rudy" Ford** playing the role of big-play speedster.

Tony Stevens and **Earnest Robinson** give the Tigers' offense a couple of big-bodied receivers who can stretch the field and win battles at the top of the route.

Auburn's group of defensive line signees is also impressive. Defensive end **Carl Lawson** is an explosive and relentless pass rusher, and position mate **Elijah Daniel** has the frame and athleticism to be a star.

Five-star defensive tackle **Montravius Adams**, who could have signed with almost any school in the country, and **Ben Bradley**, another top JUCO prospect, will join Daniel and Lawson up front.

Auburn also added a couple of JUCO prospects for immediate help at linebacker and safety with **Kenny Flowers** and **Brandon King**, respectively.

10 Florida State

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-1, WR-3, TE-1, OL-3, DE-3, DT-1, LB-5, DB-3

THE BUZZ: Bobby Bowden gained a reputation as a "closer" in his time at Florida State and Jimbo Fisher has picked right up.

On the offensive side of the ball, running back **Ryan Green** is a star with his ability to make big plays as a running back, pass catcher or return man.

Isaiah Jones is another big-time weapon at the receiver position with tremendous size, and **Ira Denson**, a physical mauler on the offensive line, dominated the camp circuit last summer.

The Seminoles also brought in a star-studded defensive class and it all starts up front with four-star defensive tackle **Keith Bryant**. **DeMarcus Walker**, who was committed to Alabama for a large portion of the recruiting cycle, joined the FSU class just prior to his enrollment in January and will give the 'Noles an explosive pass rusher on the edge.

An impressive group of linebackers, made up of **Matthew Thomas**, **E.J. Levenberry Jr.** and **Freddie Stevenson**, will play behind Bryant and Walker. All three are fast, physical and aggressive.

Florida State was also able to convince coveted cornerback **Jalen Ramsey** to flip from USC late in the game, and he will join **Marquez White** to form one of the biggest and most athletic cover-corner tandems in the country.

11 Texas A&M

THE PARTICULARS: QB-2, RB-1,WR-6, TE-1, OL-3, DE-3, DT-3, LB-5, DB-7

THE BUZZ: Texas A&M burst onto the SEC scene last year on the shoulders of Heisman winner Johnny Manziel, and after the all the letters of intent were signed in 2013, Johnny Football will have plenty of help.

The class is headlined by freak 6-5, 225-pound receiver **Ricky Seals-Jones**, who is one of six wide receivers signed by Kevin Sumlin and crew. Seals-Jones is joined by fellow four-stars **JaQuay Williams**, **Kyrion Parker** and **Sebastian Larue**.

Rivals250 quarterback **Kenny Hill** will be a backup early on, but has the talent to be a star when Manziel leaves.

The Aggies brought in the bulk of the 2013 class on defense with 18 signees. **Isaiah Golden** and **Justin Manning** are a couple of disruptive forces at defensive tackle who can stop the run and push the pocket. **Daeshon Hall** is an athletic force off the edge who can create problems with his 6-6 frame.

Sumlin also signed five active linebackers and a total of seven defensive backs. Remember the name **Kameron Miles**, as he is a 6-2, 200-pound ball-hawking safety who can also intimidate receivers with his size and fearlessness. Talented cornerbacks **Noel Ellis** and **Tavares Garner** will join Miles on the back end of the Aggies' defense.

12 Georgia

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-3, WR-5, TE-1, OL-4, DE-2, DT-4, LB-5, DB-8

THE BUZZ: Mark Richt's staff signed yet another stellar class at Georgia and one that filled major needs.

Georgia targeted four-star quarterback **Brice Ramsey** early and fought a spring push from Alabama to keep him in the fold.

The UGA offensive staff also went into Florida to get bruising running back **A.J. Turman** and into South Carolina to get playmaking athlete **Tramel Terry**. **Jonathon Rumph** was a huge pickup for Georgia at receiver from the JUCO ranks, as was Tallahassee, Fla., native **Reggie Davis**.

Army All-American **Brandon Kublanow** was the top signee on the offensive line for the Bulldogs, and he could play guard or center going forward.

On defense, where Georgia lost nine starters from the 2012 season, Richt and his staff were able to bring in quite a few early enrollees. Prep school defensive tackle **John Atkins** enrolled early and will be relied upon for depth in 2013.

At linebacker, UGA signed three four-star prospects and went into Indiana to get a thumper in **Tim Kimbrough**. Safety **Tray Matthews** was the Bulldogs' highest-ranked prospect overall, and he could play right away in a Georgia secondary depleted by the graduation.

The cornerbacks, **Shaquille Wiggins**, **Reggie Wilkerson** and **Brendan Langley**, are all ranked as four-stars and all have the talent to play sizeable roles in year one.

13 Southern California

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-1, OL-2, DT-1, LB-2, DB-3

THE BUZZ: The USC staff came into the 2013 recruiting cycle with the knowledge that the class would be small, and the response was simple; fill it with elite prospects.

Out of the 12 prospects the Trojans signed, five were rated as five-stars and all were ranked four-stars or higher.

Quarterback **Max Browne** has all the tools to be the next elite signal-caller to play at USC, and he enrolled in January. He also got a few weapons in this class with electric wide receiver **Steven Mitchell** and running backs **Ty Isaac** and **Justin Davis**.

On the offensive line, the Trojans signed **Khaliel Rodgers**, who is a dominant run-blocker, and athletic tackle **Nico Falah**.

Defensive tackle **Kenny Bigelow** was virtually unblockable in Army All-American practices in January, and, like Browne, he arrived on campus in January.

Michael Hutchings and **Quinton Powell** will look to continue USC's linebacker tradition and both are the long, fast and athletic types who have the ability to dominate.

In the secondary, USC grabbed two five-star safeties in **Leon McQuay III** and **Su'a Cravens**, and an elite cover corner in **Chris Hawkins**.

14 Clemson

THE PARTICULARS: RB-2, WR-3, TE-1, OL-2, DE-3, DT-1, LB-3, DB-8

THE BUZZ: Clemson added yet another talented recruiting class in 2013, which has become the norm under Dabo Swinney.

The Tigers reached into the talent-rich state of Georgia to pull star running back **Tyshon Dye** and talented wide receiver **Kyrin Priester**. Swinney also filled a major need for a big receiver with 6-4, 195-pound **Mike Williams**, a Palmetto State native.

On the offensive line, **Tyrone Crowder** was impressive when asked to play tackle at the Shrine Bowl in December, but he will be an interior lineman in Death Valley.

Shaq Lawson will be a huge addition at defensive end out of prep school along with fierce edge rusher **Ebenezer Ogundeko**. Hawaii native **Scott Pagano** will look to join those two to form a solid front four for Clemson in the future.

Ben Boulware and **Dorian O'Daniel** are a couple of the best linebackers on the East Coast and both are explosive and instinctive tackling machines who can quarterback the defense.

At defensive back, Clemson signed a total of eight players, with Rivals100 cornerback **Mackensie Alexander**, who chose the Tigers on National Signing Day, being the most talented of the bunch. Safety **Jayron Kearse**, a Miami commitment at one point, is one to keep an eye on as he possess the size and range that teams covet at the position.

15 Oklahoma

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-1, WR-4, OL-3, DE-3, DT-4, LB-2, DB-5, K-1

THE BUZZ: Oklahoma brought in a 2013 class that met needs with some top talent.

For starters, Bob Stoops' staff pulled a big time quarterback out of Texas in **Cody Thomas**. The 6-5, 220-pound pocket passer has the arm strength and makeup to be a star. The class also includes four signees at receiver for Thomas to build around.

Keith Ford could be Oklahoma's next great running back and is one of the top 50 recruits in the country. Mammoth JUCO lineman **Dionte Savage** comes in at 6-5, 345 pounds but has excellent athleticism and could play right away if he picks up the offense.

The Sooners had a big need for defensive linemen in this class, and responded by signing seven total prospects up front. **D.J. Ward** is a pass rusher with the ability to be elite, and defensive tackle **Kerrick Huggins**, from Dallas (Tex.) Skyline, is one of the most disruptive defensive linemen in this class.

Stoops and company also reached into Fresno, Calif., to grab a couple of four-star teammates at safety in **Hatari Byrd** and **L.J. Moore**. Both are elite athletes with tremendous upside as playmakers in the secondary. Also keep an eye on Tulsa native **Dominique Alexander**, who could end up at safety or linebacker in Norman.

16 South Carolina

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, OL-5, DE-2, DT-1, LB-6, DB-4

THE BUZZ: Steve Spurrier has turned South Carolina into a perennial SEC East contender, and a big reason for that has been strong recruiting.

South Carolina got its quarterback of the future with North Carolina native **Connor Mitch**, and the four-star prospect has the football IQ and decision-making ability to flourish in the Ol' Ball Coach's offense.

David Williams was a huge pickup for the Gamecocks at running back, as he has an elite burst and can hit the big play at any time. Five offensive linemen were brought in to protect Mitch and pave the way for Williams with **D.J. Park** and **Na'Ty Rodgers** being a couple of talented bookends at tackle.

Kelsey Griffin is a dominant run-stopper on the interior defensive line with the athleticism to pursue and make plays all over the field. **Larenz Bryant** is as rangy as any linebacker in country and can both stop the run and defend against the pass.

Skai Moore is similar to Bryant at linebacker but has the frame at 6-2 to put on good weight and become a physical run stopper in the future. At defensive back, **Pharoh Cooper** has the hips and quickness to become an elite cornerback, but he could also star on the offensive side of the ball and as a return man.

17 Nebraska

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-2, TE-2, OL-6, DE-4, DT-2, LB-3, DB-3

THE BUZZ: After its second year in the Big Ten and an appearance in the conference title game, Nebraska was able to bring in a top-20 class that will give the Cornhuskers a chance to get back to that point in the near future.

Bo Pelini got his man at quarterback with an October commitment from **Johnny Stanton**, and signed two talented running backs with contrasting styles in **Terrell Newby** and **Adam Taylor**. Newby is a small scatback-type, while Taylor is the more prototypical power back.

Tre'vell Dixon gave the Cornhuskers a Signing Day surprise at the receiver position, and he has the speed to stretch the field. TE **Greg Hart** and WR **Kevin Gladney** also signed with Nebraska. Both are impressive athletes with great hands.

JUCO defensive end **Randy Gregory** will give the Nebraska pass rush a boost right away as he is an explosive edge rusher with the length to cause nightmares for Big Ten offensive tackles.

Josh Banderas and **Marcus Newby** are two active and instinctive linebacker prospects who chose the Cornhuskers from impressive offer lists. At defensive back, safety **Nathan Gerry** possesses a combination of size, speed and instincts that could make him a highly productive player down the road.

18 Washington

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-1, TE-1, WR-3, OL-3, DE-2, DT-2, LB-3, DB-5, K-1

THE BUZZ: Steve Sarkisian was an elite recruiter while an assistant at USC and in his third year at Washington, the Huskies are now bringing in top talent as well.

Sarkisian targeted dual-threat quarterback **Troy Williams** early and landed the four-star prospect last summer. The Washington staff then went out and surrounded Williams with talent at wide receiver with the addition of **Damore'ea Stringfellow** and **Darrell Daniels**. Both are taller than 6-2 and have the speed to get behind a defense.

In addition to the explosive talent added on offense, the Huskies also signed some explosive playmakers on defense. Defensive end **Joe Mathis** chose Washington over a number of other Pac-12 teams and he will team up with defensive tackle **Elijah Qualls** to create an athletic defensive front in Seattle.

At linebacker, **Sean Constantine** is a tackling machine with elite length. **Jermaine Kelly** is the most talented signee in the defensive backfield and at 6-2, he is one of the biggest cornerbacks in the country. **Connor O'Brien** is an intriguing prospect at 6-4, 205 pounds because he will start his career at safety, but he could also grow into that frame and play linebacker in the future.

19 Vanderbilt

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-1, WR-5, TE-4, OL-2, DE-2, DT-1, LB-3, DB-5

THE BUZZ: After his second season as the Vanderbilt head man, James Franklin reeled what is bound to be one of many top-20 recruiting classes.

The Commodores went into Georgia and got Rivals250 quarterback **Johnathon McCrary**, and he has an incredible upside. McCrary can make plays with his legs and arm and does an excellent job of extending the play to allow his guys to get open down the field.

McCrary will have at least one big time weapon for the future in stud receiver **Jordan Cunningham**. Vandy also signed a total of four tight ends to run Franklin's offense. Colorado native **Mitchell Parsons** leads that group at 6-5, 230 pounds. He has excellent hands.

Linebackers **Nigel Bowden** and **Zach Cunningham** are the stars of the class on defense. Bowden has a nose for the football and is a sure tackler when he gets there. Cunningham is the more athletic of the two and has the explosiveness to come off the edge on third down.

Vandy created some depth in the defensive backfield with five signees. One-time Florida commitment **Tre Bell** is likely the most talented of the bunch.

20 Miami

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-3, WR-2, TE-2, OL-3, DE-2, LB-3, DB-2

THE BUZZ: The 2013 class saw Al Golden and his Miami staff start something that they hope to build upon in years to come as the Hurricanes kept some of that South Florida talent at home.

Miami decided to go out of state to get its quarterback of the future in New Jersey native **Kevin Olsen**, and he will be surrounded with some excellent weapons at running back, tight end and receiver.

Cornelius Elder could play running back or slot receiver in Coral Gables, and was a late addition to the class for the Hurricanes. **Stacy Coley** and **Derrick Griffin** are a couple of tremendous playmakers that can stretch the field, and Griffin, at 6-6, is an ideal red zone target. Miami will also look to continue its rich tight end tradition with JUCO star **Beau Sandland** and Louisiana native **Standish Dobard**.

Al-Quadin Muhammad is an absolute star on the defensive side of the ball. Muhammad is an explosive pass rusher with tremendous length and a relentless motor. Athletic linebacker **Jermaine Grace** chose Miami over an impressive list of schools and is a sideline-to-sideline player.

Cornerback **Artie Burns** and safety **Jamal Carter** are two Miami natives that will provide speed, range and ball-hawking ability to Miami's defensive backfield.

21 Tennessee

THE PARTICULARS: QB-2, RB-1, WR-4, TE-2, OL-3, DE-3, LB-1, DB-5

THE BUZZ: Butch Jones took over as coach on Dec. 7 and didn't waste any time in hitting the recruiting trail.

Objective No. 1 was to hold on to the top prospects who had already committed to the Volunteers, and he did that by securing the signatures of quarterback **Riley Ferguson**, offensive lineman **Austin Sanders**, wide receiver **Paul Harris** and defensive back **Jalen Reeves-Maybin**.

The second objective was to go out and add some playmakers to the class, and Jones did just that by landing some of the class' top prospects down the stretch.

Defensive end **Jason Carr** pledged to the Vols in January, and at 6-6 280 pounds, he has the ability to rush the passer and stuff the run. Tennessee was also able to beat out Clemson for a couple of electric wide receivers in North Carolina native **MarQuez North** and Georgia native **Ryan Jenkins**.

North is an Army All-American with the talent to be a No. 1 target down the road, while Jenkins, who flipped from Clemson to Tennessee in January, is one of the quickest athletes in the class.

Josh Dobbs, a quarterback out of Alpharetta (Ga.), is another one to keep an eye on as he possesses a tremendous upside. Dobbs is an excellent decision-maker with well-above-average arm talent and athleticism.

22 Oregon

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-2, WR-2, TE-1, OL-4, DE-1, DT-1, LB-3, DB-3, K-1

THE BUZZ: Oregon narrowly missed a chance to play for the national championship for the second time in three years and lost coach Chip Kelly to the Philadelphia Eagles just a short time before National Signing Day.

Despite that adversity, Mark Helfrich and his staff held on to the top prospects in the class and reeled in some nice targets close to Signing Day.

The unquestioned star of the class is five-star running back **Thomas Tyner**. Tyner gives the Ducks a physical power back that has been missing in Eugene, but he can also explode through a seam and create the big play.

Helfrich also added a couple of excellent pass catchers in **Devon Allen** and **Darren Carrington**. The offensive line was a priority in the class, and Oregon signed two four-star tackles in **Cameron Hunt** and **Evan Voeller**.

This class was also a big one on the defensive side of the ball as the Ducks added a number of playmakers. **Torrodney Prevot** could play defensive end or outside linebacker, but wherever he plays, he will be a force when it comes to rushing the passer.

Oregon also reached into San Diego to grab twin brothers **Tyree** and **Tyrell Robinson**. Tyree will play safety in Eugene, while his brother will start out at outside linebacker.

23 Virginia Tech

THE PARTICULARS: QB-2, RB-1, WR-3, OL-4, DE-1, LB-2, DB-6

THE BUZZ: Virginia Tech did an excellent job in the 2013 class of bringing in difference-makers, especially on defense.

Starting out on offense, Frank Beamer was able to sign a quarterback with big-time potential in pocket passer **Bucky Hodges**. Hodges has a big arm to go with a 6-5 frame, and he will be pushed by dual-threat prospect **Carlis Parker**, who enrolled in January.

Depth was also created at wide receiver and offensive line as the Hokies brought in three pass-catchers and four big men to play on the offensive front.

On defense, it all starts in the trenches and Virginia Tech landed a good one in defensive end **Wyatt Teller**. Teller was dominant in Army All-American practices in January.

The Hokies haul at defensive back is arguably the best in the country. **Kendall Fuller** is an elite cornerback prospect, and he will be joined in the back half of the defense by stud safety **Holland Fisher**. Fisher has tremendous instincts and the ability to make plays on the ball and deliver intimidating hits.

24 Texas

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, WR-3, TE-1, OL-4, DE-1, LB-2, DB-3

THE BUZZ: Texas fans have become accustomed to finishing with a top-five recruiting class under Mack Brown, but this one is smaller than usual.

The Longhorns signed only 15 prospects, but more than half were ranked four stars or higher. One of the most intriguing prospects in the class is quarterback **Tyrone Swoopes**. The 6-5, 229-pound dual-threat passer looks unstoppable at times, but there have also been times where he looked closer to average. Consistency will be key, but he has unlimited potential.

The Longhorns stayed in state to grab a pair of talented receivers in **Jake Oliver** and **Jacorey Warrick**, and also signed three talented offensive linemen from the Lone Star State in **Rami Hammad**, **Darius James** and **Kent Perkins**. All are 6-5 or taller and weigh in at more than 300 pounds.

On defense, Brown brought in a star at every level of the defense starting with defensive end **Jake Raulerson**. Raulerson can rush the passer, stop the run, and could even be a blue-chip offensive tackle if he wanted.

Deoundrei Davis is a long, athletic linebacker who excels against the run and in coverage. **Antwuan Davis** has excellent size, hips and speed at cornerback and could be a star in the making.

25 West Virginia

THE PARTICULARS: QB-1, RB-4, WR-5, OL-4, DE-2, LB-6, DB-3, K-1

THE BUZZ: The 2013 class for Dana Holgorsen and West Virginia was a big one, loaded with immediate and future contributors.

The Mountaineers fought off a number of BCS schools for quarterback **Chavas Rawlins**, and signed a tremendous weapon for him in wide receiver **Shelton Gibson**.

Running back was a big need for West Virginia in this class and four ball-carriers inked with Holgorsen and company. The class also contains four athletic offensive linemen to run Holgorsen's spread, no-huddle attack.

Linebacker was another position of need in this class and the Mountaineers signed six prospects at the position. JUCO standout **Brandon Golson**, a former South Carolina commitment, could play major snaps right away in Morgantown, while another JUCO linebacker, **d'Vante Henry** could play linebacker or rush the quarterback from the edge.

JUCO defensive end **Dontrill Hyman** will be counted on right away to be a force in the Mountaineers' three-man front.

In the defensive backfield, West Virginia brought in two physically impressive safeties in Georgia native **Jeremy Tyler** and Pennsylvania native **Daryl Worley**. Tyler is a heavy hitter, while Worley is better in coverage.

100 FOR 2013

INCOMING FRESHMEN

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

Rk	Name	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/School	College

QUARTERBACKS

7.	Max Browne	6-5/215	Sammamish (WA) Skyline	USC
24.	Christian Hackenberg	6-4/212	Fork Union (VA) Fork Union Military Acad.	Penn State
71.	Troy Williams	6-0/173	Harbor City (CA) Narbonne	Washington
73.	Hayden Rettig	6-4/210	Los Angeles (CA) Cathedral	LSU
81.	Shane Morris	6-3/183	Warren (MI) De La Salle	Michigan
93.	Jeremy Johnson	6-6/215	Montgomery (AL) Carver	Auburn
99.	Anu Solomon	6-1/202	Las Vegas (NV) Bishop Gorman	Arizona

RUNNING BACKS

8.	Derrick Green	6-0/220	Richmond (VA) Hermitage	Michigan
17.	Thomas Tyner	6-0/200	Beaverton (OR) Aloha	Oregon
19.	Greg Bryant	5-11/197	Delray Beach (FL) American Heritage Sch.	Notre Dame
27.	Ty Isaac	6-3/215	Joliet (IL) Joliet Catholic	USC
29.	Taquan Mizzell	5-10/183	Virginia Beach (VA) Bayside	Virginia
36.	Derrick Henry	6-3/243	Yulee (FL) Yulee	Alabama
38.	Kelvin Taylor	5-11/216	Belle Glade (FL) Glades Day	Florida
45.	Alvin Kamara	5-10/197	Norcross (GA) Norcross	Alabama
48.	Keith Ford	5-11/195	Cypress (TX) Cypress Ranch	Oklahoma
53.	Altee Tenpenny	6-0/212	North Little Rock (AR) N. Little Rock	Alabama
62.	Justin Davis	6-1/194	Stockton (CA) Lincoln	USC
72.	Ryan Green	5-10/187	St. Petersburg (FL) Catholic	Florida State
75.	Terrell Newby	5-10/180	West Hills (CA) Chaminade	Nebraska
79.	Tyren Jones	5-9/215	Marietta (GA) Walton	Alabama
84.	Ezekiel Elliott	6-0/198	St. Louis (MO) John Burroughs School	Ohio State
87.	T.J. Logan	5-9/175	Greensboro (NC) Northern Guilford	North Carolina
100.	Dontre Wilson	5-10/174	DeSoto (TX) DeSoto	Ohio State

WIDE RECEIVERS

5.	Laquon Treadwell	6-3/198	Crete (IL) Crete Monee	Mississippi
37.	Marquez North	6-3/205	Charlotte (NC) Mallard Creek	Tennessee
43.	Derrick Griffin	6-6/215	Rosenberg (TX) Terry	Miami (FL)
46.	Robert Foster	6-3/187	Monaca (PA) Central Valley	Alabama
52.	Demarcus Robinson	6-2/200	Fort Valley (GA) Peach County	Florida
54.	Steven Mitchell	5-10/176	Mission Hills (CA) Bishop Alemany	USC
63.	Alvin Bailey	5-11/170	Seffner (FL) Armwood	Florida
69.	Robbie Rhodes	6-1/186	Fort Worth (TX) Southwest	Baylor
76.	James Quick	6-1/180	Louisville (KY) Trinity	Louisville
85.	Damore'ea Stringfellow	6-2/205	Moreno Valley (CA) Rancho Verde	Washington
95.	Tony Stevens	6-3/175	Orlando (FL) Evans	Auburn

TIGHT ENDS

16.	O.J. Howard	6-6/235	Autauga (AL) Autauga Academy	Alabama
68.	DeSean Smith	6-4/222	Lake Charles (LA) Barbe	LSU
78.	Adam Breneman	6-5/228	Camp Hill (PA) Cedar Cliff	Penn State

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

14.	Laremy Tunsil	6-6/295	Lake City (FL) Columbia	Mississippi
31.	Dorian Johnson	6-6/280	Belle Vernon (PA) Belle Vernon Area	Pittsburgh
41.	Kent Perkins	6-5/300	Dallas (TX) Lake Highlands	Texas
50.	Ethan Pocic	6-7/285	Lemont (IL) Lemont	LSU
51.	Khaliel Rodgers	6-3/300	Elkton (MD) Eastern Christian Acad.	USC
55.	Ira Denson	6-4/317	Madison (FL) Madison	Florida State
58.	Brendan Mahon	6-5/315	Randolph (NJ) Randolph	Penn State
60.	Steve Elmer	6-6/305	Midland (MI) Midland	Notre Dame
65.	Darius James	6-5/319	Killeen (TX) Harker Heights	Texas
74.	John Montelus	6-5/295	Everett (MA) Everett	Notre Dame
77.	Grant Hill	6-6/301	Huntsville (AL) Huntsville	Alabama
82.	Patrick Kugler	6-5/280	Wexford (PA) North Allegheny	Michigan
90.	Evan Lisle	6-6/265	Centerville (OH) Centerville	Ohio State

DEFENSIVE ENDS

1.	Robert Nkemdiche	6-5/260	Loganville (GA) Grayson	Mississippi
4.	Carl Lawson	6-2/253	Alpharetta (GA) Milton	Auburn
11.	Jonathan Allen	6-3/263	Ashburn (VA) Stone Bridge	Alabama
20.	Chris Jones	6-5/250	Houston (MS) Houston	Mississippi State
23.	Frank Herron	6-5/260	Memphis (TN) Central	LSU
47.	Joey Bosa	6-5/270	Fort Lauderdale (FL) St. Thomas Aquinas	Ohio State
49.	Al-Quadin Muhammad	6-4/225	Ramsey (NJ) Don Bosco Prep	Miami (FL)
57.	DeMarcus Walker	6-4/280	Jacksonville (FL) Sandalwood	Florida State
59.	Wyatt Teller	6-4/264	Bealeton (VA) Liberty	Virginia Tech
61.	Dee Liner	6-3/281	Muscle Shoals (AL) Muscle Shoals	Alabama

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

6.	Kenny Bigelow	6-3/295	Elkton (MD) Eastern Christian Academy	USC
21.	Eddie Vanderdoes	6-3/310	Auburn (CA) Placer	Notre Dame
25.	Montravius Adams	6-3/290	Vienna (GA) Dooly County	Auburn
33.	A'Shawn Robinson	6-4/320	Fort Worth (TX) Arlington Heights	Alabama
70.	Henry Poggi	6-4/260	Baltimore (MD) Gilman School	Michigan
96.	Justin Manning	6-2/275	Dallas (TX) Kimball	Texas A&M

LINEBACKERS

3.	Jaylon Smith	6-3/212	Fort Wayne (IN) Bishop Luers	Notre Dame
13.	Reuben Foster	6-1/244	Auburn (AL) Auburn	Alabama
15.	Matthew Thomas	6-3/205	Miami (FL) Booker T. Washington	Florida State
26.	Mike Mitchell	6-4/216	Plano (TX) Prestonwood Christian Acad.	Ohio State
28.	Alex Anzalone	6-3/229	Wyomissing (PA) Wyomissing Area	Florida
88.	Yannick Ngakoue	6-3/240	Wash. (DC) Friendship Collegiate Acad.	Maryland
91.	Deoundrei Davis	6-3/215	Cypress (TX) Cypress Woods	Texas
94.	Michael Hutchings	6-2/210	Concord (CA) De La Salle	USC
97.	Peter Kalambayi	6-3/238	Matthews (NC) Butler	Stanford

DEFENSIVE BACKS

2.	Vernon Hargreaves III	5-11/185	Tampa (FL) Wharton	Florida
9.	Kendall Fuller	5-11/189	Olney (MD) Our Lady Of Good Counsel	Virginia Tech
10.	Jalen Ramsey	6-0/190	Nashville (TN) Brentwood Academy	Florida State
12.	Su'a Cravens	6-1/205	Murrieta (CA) Vista Murrieta	USC
18.	Tre'Davious White	5-11/175	Shreveport (LA) Green Oaks	LSU
22.	Leon McQuay III	6-2/185	Seffner (FL) Armwood	USC
30.	Max Redfield	6-2/195	Mission Viejo (CA) Mission Viejo	Notre Dame
32.	Vonn Bell	6-1/190	Rossville (GA) Ridgeland	Ohio State
34.	Chris Hawkins	5-11/170	Rancho Cucamonga (CA) R. Cucamonga	USC
39.	Cameron Burrows	6-0/203	Trotwood (OH) Trotwood-Madison	Ohio State
42.	Mackensie Alexander	5-11/175	Immokalee (FL) Immokalee	Clemson
44.	Tray Matthews	6-0/194	Newnan (GA) Newnan	Georgia
56.	Priest Willis	6-2/185	Tempe (AZ) Marcos De Niza	UCLA
64.	Keanu Neal	6-1/203	Bushnell (FL) South Sumter	Florida
67.	Marcell Harris	6-1/207	Orlando (FL) Dr. Phillips	Florida
80.	Tahaan Goodman	6-2/185	Rancho Cucamonga (CA) R. Cucamonga	UCLA
83.	Holland Fisher	6-1/196	Midlothian (VA) Manchester	Virginia Tech
86.	Antonio Conner	6-2/202	Batesville (MS) South Panola	Mississippi
89.	Eli Apple	6-0/185	Voorhees (NJ) Eastern	Ohio State
98.	Antwuan Davis	6-0/180	Bastrop (TX) Bastrop	Texas

ATHLETES

35.	Jalin Marshall	5-11/196	Middletown (OH) Middletown	Ohio State
40.	Ricky Seals-Jones	6-5/220	Sealy (TX) Sealy	Texas A&M
66.	ArDarius Stewart	6-1/190	Fultondale (AL) Fultondale	Alabama
92.	Kendell Beckwith	6-3/228	Jackson (LA) East Feliciana	LSU

100 FOR 2014

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

Rk.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/School

QUARTERBACKS

11.	Deshaun Watson	6-3/188	Gainesville, GA/Gainesville
18.	Will Grier	6-3/171	Davidson, NC/Davidson Day
20.	Keller Chryst	6-4/230	Palo Alto, CA/Palo Alto
63.	David Cornwell	6-5/235	Norman, OK/North
65.	Caleb Henderson	6-4/223	Burke, VA/Lake Braddock
73.	Jerrod Heard	6-1/193	Denton, TX/Guyer

RUNNING BACKS

3.	Leonard Fournette	6-1/225	New Orleans, LA/St. Augustine
5.	Sony Michel	5-11/205	Plantation, FL/American Heritage
15.	Jalen Hurd	6-3/210	Hendersonville, TN/Beech Senior
22.	Dalvin Cook	5-11/192	Miami, FL/Miami Central
26.	Nathan Starks	5-11/200	Las Vegas, NV/Bishop Gorman
40.	Joseph Yearby	5-9/177	Miami, FL/Miami Central
45.	Racean Thomas	5-11/198	Oxford, AL/Oxford
75.	Adam Choice	5-9/190	Thomasville, GA/Thomas County Central
82.	Joe Mixon	6-2/207	Oakley, CA/Freedom
95.	Nick Chubb	5-11/218	Cedartown, GA/Cedartown
98.	Stanley Williams	5-8/186	Bethlehem, GA/George Walton Academy

WIDE RECEIVERS

24.	Allen Lazard	6-4/190	Urbandale, IA/Urbandale
29.	Ermon Lane	6-2/172	Homestead, FL/Homestead
52.	KD Cannon	5-10/163	Mount Pleasant, TX/Mount Pleasant
56.	Drake Harris	6-4/180	Grand Rapids, MI/Grand Rapids Christian
57.	Jalen Brown	6-2/183	Phoenix, AZ/Mountain Pointe
67.	Demarre Kitt	6-1/195	Tyrone, GA/Sandy Creek
72.	Josh Malone	6-5/187	Gallatin, TN/Station Camp
83.	Malachi Dupre	6-4/175	River Ridge, LA/John Curtis
87.	Mark Andrews	6-6/225	Scottsdale, AZ/Desert Mountain
93.	Artavis Scott	5-11/180	Tarpon Springs, FL/East Lake
96.	Shaq Davidson	6-0/170	Gaffney, SC/Gaffney

TIGHT ENDS

None

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

7.	Cameron Robinson	6-6/320	Monroe, LA/West Monroe
19.	Braden Smith	6-6/275	Olathe, KS/Olathe South Sr
31.	Damian Prince	6-7/310	Forestville, MD/Bishop McNamara
34.	Donell Stanley	6-3/311	Latta, SC/Latta
50.	Kc McDermott	6-6/301	Wellington, FL/Palm Beach Central
55.	Alex Bars	6-6/290	Nashville, TN/Montgomery Bell Academy
62.	Jackson Barton	6-6/275	Salt Lake City, UT/Brighton
66.	Quenton Nelson	6-5/282	Red Bank, NJ/Red Bank Catholic
71.	Casey Tucker	6-6/280	Chandler, AZ/Hamilton
74.	Jordan Poland	6-8/335	La Jolla, CA/La Jolla Country Day
79.	Ross Pierschbacher	6-4/275	Cedar Falls, IA/Cedar Falls
86.	Bentley Spain	6-6/285	Charlotte, NC/Providence
88.	Demetrius Knox	6-4/287	Fort Worth, TX/All Saints Episcopal
89.	Steven Moss	6-4/270	Fredericksburg, VA/Chancellor
92.	Andy Bauer	6-6/304	St. Louis, MO/DeSmet
94.	Jamarco Jones	6-5/285	Chicago, IL/De La Salle

DEFENSIVE ENDS

1.	Da'Shawn Hand	6-4/245	Woodbridge, VA/Woodbridge Senior
9.	Lorenzo Carter	6-5/226	Norcross, GA/Norcross
14.	Kentavious Street	6-4/255	Greenville, NC/Rose
21.	Malik McDowell	6-6/292	Detroit, MI/Loyola
28.	Solomon Thomas	6-3/263	Coppell, TX/Coppell
30.	Jalyn Holmes	6-5/225	Norfolk, VA/Lake Taylor
36.	Myles Garrett	6-4/229	Arlington, TX/Martin
42.	Gerald Willis III	6-4/247	New Orleans, LA/Edna Karr
43.	Nifae Lealao	6-2/280	Sacramento, CA/Capital Christian
48.	Deondre Clark	6-3/231	Oklahoma City, OK/Douglass
77.	Keyon Brown	6-2/229	Wauchula, FL/Hardee Senior
80.	Qualen Cunningham	6-3/220	Chandler, AZ/Hamilton
81.	Derick Roberson	6-3/225	San Antonio, TX/Brennan
85.	Andrew Williams	6-4/245	McDonough, GA/Eagle's Landing Christian

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

6.	Andrew Brown	6-4/292	Chesapeake, VA/Oscar Smith
37.	Derrick Nnadi	6-2/288	Virginia Beach, VA/Ocean Lakes
39.	Elisha Shaw	6-6/299	Atlanta, GA/Tucker
46.	Travonte Valentine	6-3/286	Palm Bay, FL/Bayside
69.	Khairi Clark	6-2/325	Hollywood, FL/Chaminade Madonna
90.	Josh Frazier	6-3/334	Springdale, AR/Har-Ber

LINEBACKERS

16.	Raekwon McMillan	6-3/235	Hinesville, GA/Liberty County
23.	Hoza Scott	6-2/205	La Porte, TX/La Porte
35.	Tre Williams	6-2/220	Mobile, AL/St. Paul's
51.	Korie Rogers	6-2/218	Buford, GA/Buford
53.	Clifton Garrett	6-3/220	Joliet, IL/Plainfield South
58.	Dillon Bates	6-3/207	Ponte Vedra, FL/Ponte Vedra
60.	Kain Daub	6-3/240	Jacksonville, FL/Sandalwood
61.	Zach Whitley	6-2/210	Galena Park, TX/North Shore
70.	Nyles Morgan	6-2/220	Crete, IL/Crete Monee
84.	Michael Ferns	6-3/235	Saint Clairsville, OH/Saint Clairsville
91.	Christian Miller	6-4/200	Columbia, SC/Spring Valley
97.	Delvin Purifoy	6-2/228	Pensacola, FL/Catholic
99.	Dante Booker	6-3/210	Akron, OH/St. Vincent-St. Mary

DEFENSIVE BACKS

2.	Jabrill Peppers	6-1/210	Paramus, NJ/Paramus Catholic
4.	Quin Blanding	6-2/196	Virginia Beach, VA/Bayside
8.	Adoree' Jackson	5-10/172	Gardena, CA/Junipero Serra
10.	Marlon Humphrey	6-0/168	Hoover, AL/Hoover
13.	Tony Brown	6-0/182	Beaumont, TX/Ozen
25.	Laurence Jones	6-2/210	Monroe, LA/Neville
27.	Jalen Tabor	6-0/181	Washington, DC/Friendship Collegiate Acad.
32.	Damon Webb	6-0/175	Detroit, MI/Cass Tech
33.	Jamal Adams	6-0/199	Lewisville, TX/Hebron
38.	Edward Paris	6-1/200	Mansfield, TX/Timberview
54.	Michiah Quick	6-0/170	Fresno, CA/Central East
59.	Todd Kelly	6-1/190	Knoxville, TN/Webb School Of Knoxville
68.	Budda Baker	5-11/178	Bellevue, WA/Bellevue
76.	Dylan Sumner-Gardner	6-2/197	Mesquite, TX/West Mesquite
100.	Darrion Johnson	5-11/170	Brenham, TX/Brenham

ATHLETES

12.	Elijah Hood	6-0/212	Charlotte, NC/Charlotte Catholic
17.	Bo Scarbrough	6-2/222	Tuscaloosa, AL/Northridge
41.	Marshon Lattimore	6-0/185	Cleveland, OH/Glenville Academic Campus
44.	Nick Harvey	5-11/180	Richmond, TX/Travis
47.	Montae Nicholson	6-3/200	Monroeville, PA/Gateway
49.	Tyler Luatua	6-4/230	La Mirada, CA/La Mirada
64.	Cameron Denson	6-1/170	Tucson, AZ/Salpointe
78.	Ronnie Clark	6-3/205	Calera, AL/Calera

TOP 5 TEAMS BY POSITION

OFFENSE

Quarterback

1. LSU

Anthony Jennings, Hayden Rettig

The Tigers brought in the nation's No. 3 pro-style quarterback and the No. 6 dual-threat quarterback. Both are four-stars and inside the top 150 prospects nationally, adding depth and elite talent to the most critical position on the field.

2. USC

Max Browne

Browne went wire-to-wire as the nation's top quarterback in the 2013 class and proved his ranking time and again at events such as the Rivals100 Five-Star Challenge and the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, where others were targeting his No. 1 status.

3. Penn State

Christian Hackenberg, Tyler Ferguson

It is tough to measure the value of Hackenberg to Penn State's 2013 class. Not only is he the No. 2 quarterback in this class, he also stuck with the Nittany Lions after their sanctions were handed down. Ferguson comes from the JC ranks and gives Hackenberg time to develop.

4. Texas A&M

Kenny Hill, Kohl Stewart

The only other school to land two four-star quarterbacks beside LSU. Stewart and Hill made their commitments before Johnny Manziel started a game, let alone won the Heisman, and both have ambitions to be his successor.

5. Auburn

Jeremy Johnson, Nick Marshall

At 6-6, 215 pounds, Johnson might draw comparisons to former Auburn great Cam Newton, but he is much more of a pocket passer than the Heisman Trophy winner. Marshall is the No. 2 rated JC quarterback, and brings more of the dual-threat abilities.

Running Back

1. Alabama

Derrick Henry, Tyren Jones, Alvin Kamara, Altee Tenpenny

The Crimson Tide brought in the nation's No. 2 running back class in 2012. This year they have the No. 1 class, and it is not even close. Four more four-star ball-carriers are headed to Tuscaloosa, including high school football's all-time leading career rusher, Henry.

2. USC

Ty Isaac, Justin Davis

Isaac and Davis committed to the Trojans within days of each other and said at the time they looked forward to the competition. Both bring a little something different to the running back position, but as top 100 prospects are immensely talented.

3. Ole Miss

Eugene Brazley, Mark Dodson Jr., Kailo Moore, Jordan Wilkins

The Rebels brought in four backs in the 2013 class, three of whom are rated four-stars. The group is lead by Dodson, the nation's No. 6 all-purpose back, who at 5-10, 193 pounds, has good size and is also an outstanding receiver out of the backfield.

4. Notre Dame

Greg Bryant, Tarean Folston

Grabbing Bryant out of Florida was one of the Irish's greatest recruiting feats in a 2013 class that was full of wins for head coach Brian Kelly and his staff. They then complemented the five-star backfield by adding Folston a month before National Signing Day.

5. Michigan

Derrick Green, Deveon Smith

The Wolverines are looking to get back to a power running game, and both Green and Smith are between-the-tackles runners who already weigh in at 220 pounds. Green is the nation's top running back prospect and should make an immediate impact in Ann Arbor.

Wide Receiver

1. Florida

Alvin Bailey, Ahmad Fulwood, Marqui Hawkins, Demarcus Robinson, Chris Thompson

Florida landed the nation's top wide receiver group by bringing in five prospects at the position, three of whom are rated four-stars. Bailey is a playmaker with a nose for the end zone, while Robinson is one of the most gifted WRs in the country.

2. Ole Miss

Laquon Treadwell, Quincy Adeboyejo, Derrick Jones, Quadarias Mireles

Treadwell shocked many when he spurned the big Midwest programs to sign with the Rebels, but Hugh Freeze's willingness to put the ball in the air was a big reason he won over the Chicago native. Adeboyejo used a big senior season to move into four-star territory.

3. Tennessee

Paul Harris, Ryan Jenkins, MarQuez North, Josh Smith

Butch Jones' biggest recruiting win after taking over as the Volunteers' head coach was landing North's commitment. Harris is also a four-star commitment with good size, while Jenkins and Smith give Tennessee long-term depth at the position.

4. Texas A&M

Sebastian Larue, Kyrion Parker, Jeremy Tabuyo, JaQuay Williams

Williams was a Rivals100 prospect in the class of 2012. Now with a year of prep school under his belt, he should be ready to contribute immediately for the Aggies. It's easy to recruit wide receivers when you have a Heisman winner returning at quarterback, and three of A&M's new additions are four-star prospects.

5. Auburn

Earnest Robinson, Tony Stevens, Dominic Walker

In Robinson and Stevens, Auburn landed one of the best wide receiver tandems in the 2013 class. Add in the 6-2, 195-pound Walker and the Tigers have three pass catchers who are well over 6-feet and will provide big targets for their quarterbacks.

Tight End

1. Alabama

OJ Howard

Howard has the most potential of any tight end to come out of the high school ranks since Martellus Bennett, and he walks into a great situation at Alabama. The Crimson Tide lost senior Michael Williams and return just eight career receptions at the position in 2013.

2. Vanderbilt

Nathan Marcus, Mitchell Parsons, Brandon Vandenburg, Mack Weaver

Tight end was obviously a position of focus for the Commodores in the 2013 class, as they brought in four prospects. Parsons is the lone four-star of the group. He can be an in-line tight end or split out as a receiver.

3. Notre Dame

Mike Heuerman, Jacob Matuska, Durham Smythe

Notre Dame brought in three tight ends, though they plan to move Matuska to defensive end when he arrives. Heuerman and Smythe give them two talented, versatile additions at the position.

4. LSU

DeSean Smith, Logan Stokes

Smith locked up the No. 2 tight end ranking in the 2013 class after an impressive week at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl. He has an outstanding pair of hands and will be a threat in the passing game. Stokes comes from the JC ranks.

5. Michigan

Jake Butt, Khalid Hill

In their transition from a spread to a pro-style offense, targeting tight end depth was a key for the Wolverines in 2013. Butt can handle blocking and receiving aspects of the position, while Hill could move into more of an H-back role.

Offensive Line

1. Michigan

Kyle Bosch, David Dawson, Chris Fox, Patrick Kugler, Dan Samuelson, Scott Sypniewski, Logan Tuley-Tillman

The Wolverines added their quarterback and running back of the future, and surrounded them with the nation's top offensive line group. Kugler is the highest-rated of the group and is expected to start off at the center position. Sypniewski was brought in as a long-snapper.

2. UCLA

Caleb Benenoch, Kenny Lacy, John Lopez, Poasi Moala, Christian Morris, Scott Qussenberry, Alex Redmond

Six of the Bruins' seven offensive line signees are rated four-stars. The 6-6, 293-pound Morris is the highest rated of the group. He is still raw, but has tremendous upside. Benenoch spurned all the top in-state programs to sign with UCLA.

3. Notre Dame

Hunter Bivin, Steve Elmer, Mike McGlinchey, Colin McGovern, John Montelus

Notre Dame's No. 3 finish in the national recruiting rankings was aided, in no small part, by this group of offensive linemen. Elmer and McGlinchey are true offensive tackles. Bivin could play anywhere along the line and Montelus has the look of a future NFL offensive guard.

4. Texas

Rami Hammad, Desmond Harrison, Darius James, Kent Perkins

The Longhorns did not have many scholarships to work with, but they still had needs to address on the offensive line and met those by signing four prospects, three of whom are four-stars. Perkins is the gem of the group — a powerful drive-blocker with good feet.

5. LSU

Josh Boutte, Andy Dodd, K.J. Malone, Ethan Pocic

The theme of this LSU offensive line group is strength. The 6-7, 285-pound Pocic is one of the most physical offensive tackles in the class, and the 6-5, 305-pound Boutte is the same at the guard position. Malone is the son of NBA Hall of Famer Karl Malone.

DEFENSE

Defensive Tackle

1. FLORIDA

Jaynard Bostwick, Caleb Brantley, Darious Cummings, Jarran Reed

There are no five-star defensive tackles in Florida's haul, but there are three quality four-star signees, led by Brantley and followed by Bostwick and Cummings. Reed is a three-star junior college transfer. Brantley has shown flashes of brilliance. There is no outright star power in this class, but there is a good amount of depth.

2. AUBURN

Montravius Adams, Ben Bradley

The Tigers lead the defensive tackle group with Adams, a five-star prospect who's ranked third at the position,

and Bradley, a 6-2, 315-pound junior college transfer. Both could contribute immediately and be special players. Adams is ranked the No. 25 player in the country, regardless of position. Bradley turned down a bunch of other SEC offers.

3. TEXAS A&M

Isaiah Golden, Justin Manning, Hardreck Walker

Manning and Golden provide a one-two punch that is impressive and showed well at the Army game. Both are behemoths, and both have speed and the ability to take over up the middle. Manning is rated as the sixth-best defensive tackle, and Golden comes in at No. 8. Walker is a four-star recruit but could be the sleeper in this class.

4. ALABAMA

A'Shawn Robinson, Darius Paige

Robinson showed at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl that he can play defensive tackle and has the speed to move to defensive end in a pinch. He's the fourth-best defensive tackle in the class according to Rivals.com and the No. 33 player overall. Paige is more of a traditional defensive tackle who's a run stopper up the middle. Both players weigh well north of 300 pounds.

5. USC

Kenny Bigelow

Bigelow was the lone defensive tackle commit in USC's small class, but he's a good one and that's why the Trojans made this list. The top-rated defensive tackle can no doubt be an immediate force on USC's line. He proved at the Army game that he is virtually unstoppable to block when he wants to bring it. Bigelow has everything needed to be a star in Los Angeles.

Defensive End

1. ALABAMA

Jonathan Allen, Dee Liner, Tim Williams

The Crimson Tide loaded up at defensive end and bolstered the class on Signing Day by getting Liner, the seventh-best player at that position by Rivals.com. Before Liner's commitment, Alabama still had Allen, second at defensive end, and Williams, No. 7 at weakside defensive end, so it was an impressive haul. This group is special and could help sustain the dominant Alabama defenses.

2. LSU

Tashawn Bower, Frank Herron, Christian Lacouture, Lewis Neal, Michael Patterson

The LSU class has high-end star quality plus depth, which makes it one of the better hauls at this position. Herron earned his fifth star after an impressive week at the Army game. Bower was one of the more interesting stories during Signing Day — did he sign with LSU, Auburn or someone else? That finally was put to rest. Lacouture, Neal and Patterson offer nice depth that could develop in Death Valley.

3. AUBURN

Elijah Daniel, Carl Lawson

Daniel decided against playing alongside Robert Nkemdiche, the top-rated player in the 2013 class, and instead went with the Tigers, who also signed Lawson, the No. 1 weakside defensive end. It was one of the Signing Day surprises that Daniel flipped from Ole Miss to Auburn, but it was a great addition for the Tigers. Lawson has all the skill and motivation in the world, and hanging onto him was big.

4. OLE MISS

Robert Nkemdiche

Nkemdiche was the only defensive end in Ole Miss' impressive recruiting haul, but no one is complaining. The No. 1 player in the 2013 class has the ability to be an immediate contributor in the SEC, just like former No. 1 Jadeveon Clowney was at South Carolina. There was late intrigue by other schools, but the Rebels won out for Nkemdiche, who went wire-to-wire as the top-rated player.

5. MISSISSIPPI STATE

Chris Jones

Jones was the only defensive end in Mississippi State's class, but he has the potential to be extra special. It was big for the Bulldogs to keep him from flipping to Ole Miss, and he could see the field early in his career. Jones went from a three-star to one of the best defensive ends in this class after the all-star season. He has everything one needs to be special.

Linebacker

1. FLORIDA

Alex Anzalone, Jarrad Davis, Daniel McMillian, Matt Rolin

The Gators did an excellent job of filling needs all over their linebacker corps, led by Anzalone, who had been committed elsewhere but decided to end up in Gainesville. He earned his fifth star during the all-star season and has all the tools to be an outstanding SEC linebacker. McMillian is an athletic, hard-nosed player who hits hard. Rolin and Davis will get their chances.

2. FLORIDA STATE

Ro'Derrick Hoskins, E.J. Levenberry Jr., Tyrell Lyons, Freddie Stevenson, Matthew Thomas

When Thomas did the Tomahawk Chop at his Signing Day press conference, many fans in Tallahassee had to be excited because there was a real chance he could have ended up with Miami or USC. It was a big get for the Seminoles. He was outstanding during the all-star season, and even though he's skinny packs a punch. Thomas is the star of this class, Levenberry is a big-time playmaker and there is impressive depth with the other three linebackers.

3. OHIO STATE

Trey Johnson, Mike Mitchell, Christopher Worley

Mitchell leads this group in many ways. He's a five-star linebacker who is supremely athletic and always seems to be in the right place at the right time. The Texas native is also an Urban Meyer guy — he listens, learns and he will run through a wall for his coach. He was excellent at the Army game. Johnson is rated as the third-best inside linebacker, so there is a lot of talent there. Worley is a local kid from Cleveland who could blossom.

4. NOTRE DAME

Michael Deeb, Doug Randolph, Jaylon Smith

Smith has the athleticism, the toughness and the intelligence to be an immediate contributor on Notre Dame's defense. The Army game was proof that he is one of the best players in the country, and he can make a difference on almost every play. He's great in pass coverage, too, which is a bonus. Randolph and Deeb are nice additions to a stellar group.

5. GEORGIA

Reginald Carter, Tim Kimbrough, Shaun McGee, Johnny O'Neal, Ryne Rankin

There is not a ton of star power in Georgia's class, but there's a healthy dose of depth mixed with tough players who hit hard. Kimbrough and O'Neal definitely fit that bill, and the additions of Carter, McGee and Rankin are impressive. The Bulldogs locked up a bunch of nice players.

Defensive Back

1. USC

Su'a Cravens, Chris Hawkins, Leon McQuay

The numbers across the board are light, but the Trojans loaded up at safety with Cravens and McQuay, two five-stars who could immediately see the field. Cravens has such an uncanny feel for the game that he seems to know where the ball is going to be a split second before anyone else, and McQuay is an outstanding athlete. Hawkins was almost a five-star after an outstanding showing at the Army game. Losing Jalen Ramsey late hurt the Trojans, but they have an outstanding group at this position.

2. FLORIDA

Vernon Hargreaves, Marcell Harris, Keanu Neal, Nick Washington

Hargreaves proved during the all-star season that he's the No. 1 cornerback in the country. He has the athleticism, skill and vision to be a lockdown corner for the Gators the minute he steps on campus. Harris and Neal, who had a great summer, were one spot from being five-star prospects as well. Washington adds nice depth.

3. OHIO STATE

Eli Apple, Vonn Bell, Cameron Burrows, Gareon Conley, Jayme Thompson

Ohio State added talent, depth and pretty much everything else at defensive back with solid players from top to bottom. Burrows bounced back and forth from being a five-star and a four-star prospect. Bell is the most impressive of the group and could be a special player in the coming years. Apple had been considered for five-star status, but after an average Army game he didn't get the bump. Still, he is a great addition to this class. Thompson has speed to burn.

4. LSU

Jeryl Brazil, Rickey Jefferson, Rashard Robinson, Tre'Davious White

White is athletic, great in coverage, can make up ground and proved he can do a little of everything at the Army game. He's a superb talent and one of the best athletes in this class. He leads the way, but Brazil, Jefferson and Robinson are outstanding and bring something special to the table. All three are four-star prospects who add nice depth to this class.

5. VIRGINIA TECH

Charles Clark, Brandon Facyson, Holland Fisher, Kendall Fuller, Anthony Shegog

Fuller is the best of the bunch here. He was the top-rated cornerback in the class until Hargreaves was simply outstanding at the Under Armour Game. Fuller is excellent in coverage and is a lockdown corner who could see immediate playing time in Blacksburg. Fisher is a superb athlete and a hard hitter. The three others round out a nice class.

Athlete

1. OREGON

Tyree Robinson, Tyrell Robinson, Juwaan Williams

Keeping the Robinson twins was crucial for the Ducks' recruiting class, which finished toward the top in the Pac-12. They are also basketball players, so they have a bouncy, athletic appeal to them and they should fit in perfectly in Eugene. Williams was a late addition but could be used in different spots.

2. TEXAS A&M

Laquvionte Gonzalez, Ricky Seals-Jones, Alex Sezer, Shaan Washington

Seals-Jones is an instant matchup problem because of impressive size on the outside. Once he takes more reps at wide receiver, he should grow even more comfortable at the position. Gonzalez is a speedster who is especially lethal in the slot. Sezer and Washington are nice additions.

3. OHIO STATE

Jalin Marshall, Darron Lee

Marshall is the top-rated athlete in the 2013 class by Rivals.com — and for good reason. He has the potential to dominate every time he steps on the field. It's pretty sure Urban Meyer will find ways to get him involved that will benefit the Buckeyes in numerous ways. Lee was a high school quarterback, so he's smart and savvy.

4. RUTGERS

Nadir Barnwell, Justin Goodwin, Myles Nash, Delon Stephenson, TJ Taylor

The depth of athletes for the Scarlet Knights is what's most impressive. Barnwell is the four-star among the group and he can be used in various ways, but what really stands out is that Rutgers has brought in a bunch of capable, athletic players who can contribute on either side of the ball.

5. ALABAMA

Anthony Averett, ArDarius Stewart

Stewart is the star in this class. He can throw passes, run the ball, catch the ball, return kicks and he makes big hits on defense. He should be an incredible addition to Alabama's class. Rivals.com rates him as the third-best athlete in 2013. Averett put up nice numbers in his senior season running and throwing, and on defense.

KEEPING THE *faith*

BY BILL SORRELL

Of his three sons, Rodger Carr knows firsthand who is the best quarterback. It's not David, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2002 NFL Draft. It's not Derek, the 2012 Mountain West Conference Offensive Player of the Year. It's Darren, a former defensive lineman for the University of Houston.

"He can throw it better than both me and David and always plays quarterback when we play pickup games," said Derek Carr.

During a pickup game, Darren Carr threw a bullet to Rodger who made a gut-gasping catch in the end zone. As he landed on the ball and began making a "funny noise," his three sons fell to the ground laughing. Rodger wasn't moving nor laughing, but yelling. "He was mad at us," said Derek. The catch broke Rodger's ribs.

For Derek, a record-setting quarterback at Fresno State, it wasn't his ribs that got broken, but his heart. When he tried to contact "a really cool girl," a server at a Fresno restaurant whom he had met, he learned she had given the wrong cell phone number on purpose.

While she said there was "something special" about him, she didn't like football players. Eventually they began hanging out and then Derek got a 10-page letter from her. He remembered nine words, "You are not the person I thought you were."

Her words sacked him. "I remember at that moment it scared me. I was so angry when I read it. I knew there was an evil inside me," he said.

Raised by his father and mother Sheryl Carr in a Christian home and baptized by his grandfather and Bakersfield pastor David Joyner as a child, Derek knew he had gotten off track. He was doing things he shouldn't be doing. "I was wrong," he said.

The letter became a turning point. He got on his knees and cried and prayed for what seemed like all night. "I really felt God was taking my life over and I felt like I was giving it to Him," he said.

He and Heather Neel were married on June 29, 2012. This Aug. 13 they are expecting a son, Dallas, the middle name of Derek. (Rodger was a Cowboys fan).

As Derek equips himself spiritually to be a father "with an impact" and "to be the best husband I can be," football is third in his priorities. Faith is first, followed by family.

"I hear the name Jesus and I think He is my savior. God sent Him down on this earth to die for all of us and to rise again; that is the best part. My greatest hope in Jesus is that He returns soon. I kind of want to be around when He does return; that would be amazing to experience. Either way it is going to be great."

Carr's drive to achieve great things at Fresno is faith-based. "Football is a great platform. That is the sole reason why I want to be the best quarterback who has ever played. The reason I play football, I do it all for God and for all His glory. I have felt chosen to do it since I was little," he said. "I think I would give God a disservice if I didn't go out and work harder than anyone else with the blessings and talents He has given me."

During the Bulldogs' Mountain West co-championship in 2012, Carr passed for 4,104 yards, a conference record. He has thrown 63 career touchdowns and only 16 interceptions, the second best touchdown-to-interception ratio of any returning FBS quarterback. He set the school record in career completion percentage (65.2) and single-season completion percentage (67.3). His 37 touchdown passes last season were the second most in school history and tied for third in the FBS. Carr was a first team All-MWC and *Sports Illustrated* All-America honorable mention.

With 7,760 yards, Carr needs 3,049 yards to move past Kevin Sweeney (1983-86) as Fresno's all-time passing leader. Carr and Trent Dilfer are the only Fresno State players to have back-to-back 3,000-yard passing seasons.

Fresno State head coach Tim DeRuyter called Carr "the exact portrait of what you are looking for. Having been a football coach for 23 years, I've been around a number of young men who have outstanding character and leadership traits. Derek is probably at the top of the list of guys when it comes to the total package of faith, character and leadership.

"He lives his faith every day and is not afraid to take a stand and do things the right way. If you could pick anybody and draw what you want to have as a high-character leader for your team, it would be Derek Carr. As much talent as he has, it's always about the team."

Echoed wide receiver Davante Adams, the 2012 Freshman of the Year and a *Sports Illustrated* honorable mention All-America, "Derek makes a conscious effort to make God his number one priority. In doing so, he leads with his voice as well as by example, which is in my opinion, the most important aspect of leadership."

One of five captains, Carr loves each teammate he said. He doesn't "flip out" when someone drops a ball or yell at his offensive line. "I treat them like I want to be treated. I have learned to be patient."

That Golden Rule-attitude has garnered respect. "I respect Derek as a leader and I go to him to talk about a lot of my problems because he always seems to know what to say," said wide receiver Isaiah Burse. "His faith helps him through a lot of tough situations, whether it's a tough game, with the press or addressing the team."

Derek's example has been his brother David Carr, an evangelical Christian. Derek learned not to play the blame game. "He never pointed a finger."

Since drafted by the expansionist Houston Texans, David has been on the roster of five NFL teams and is now a quarterback with the New York Giants. He was an All-American at Fresno State.

"David put goals out there for me that I wanted to achieve. Being an All-American, it pushed me. I always wanted to be like him. You can't be better than the first pick (in the NFL draft), but you can tie it."

David also passed on big-brother advice. "Don't be an idiot" (on the field) and "don't do stupid things" off it.

Derek, who ran the 40 in 4.56 seconds last summer and enters his senior season with a 3.4 GPA, remembers the moment he decided to attend Fresno State.

He was watching David get sacked on the final play of the 2001 season. There would be no BCS bowl or conference championship despite an 11-3 record.

"I am going to come here and finish what he started," said Derek, who still has the 118 letters from schools that recruited him. One goal is to be Fresno's first Heisman Trophy winner.

There was a time when Derek's collegiate career hit rock bottom. After a productive freshman season, he thought he was going to be the starter as a sophomore in 2010 but was redshirted.

"That was the time I felt like I needed the Lord most," he said.

Words from his grandfather stuck with him. Rev. Joyner had been the rock that held the family together. Before he died during Derek's senior year in high school, he wanted his family to claim Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Derek realized that it would be in God's timing when he would play. "I gave football to Him," he said.

DEREK CARR
Photo by Craig Kohlruss

SEC RECRUITING

By Rivals.com

Alabama

Overview: Alabama got its quarterback in **Cooper Bateman**. The running back class is loaded with **Derrick Henry**, **Alvin Kamara**, **Altee Tenpenny** and **Tyren Jones**. Wide receiver **Robert Foster** and tight end **OJ Howard** will give the passing game a boost. **Dee Liner** and **A'Shawn Robinson** are a couple of studs on the defensive front. **Reuben Foster** is one of the most explosive players in the country at linebacker

Headliner: Despite tremendous depth at the position in Tuscaloosa, Reuben Foster could play right away. He is that talented.

Sleeper: Quarterback **Parker McLeod** fits the mold of a Nick Saban signal caller. He takes care of the ball, is accurate, and very smart.

Bottom line: This class is loaded and Alabama did a great job meeting needs. It was a tough job, but Saban upgraded the talent in Tuscaloosa.

Florida

Overview: For the second straight recruiting cycle, Will Muschamp and company finished with one of the top overall classes in the nation. Florida once again concentrated its recruiting efforts primarily in state, with 17 of its 29 signees coming from the Sunshine State.

Headliner: Without question, not only is Tampa (Fla.) Wharton cornerback **Vernon Hargreaves III** the most highly rated prospect in Florida's signing class, he is the biggest potential difference maker as well. The nation's No. 2 rated prospect overall, VH3 (as he is known) showed himself to be a potential future All-American during a standout week in San Antonio leading up to the Army All-American Bowl.

Sleeper: Gainesville (Fla.) wideout **Chris Thompson** has a chance to become one of those "feel-good" type of stories you see featured during the college football pregame shows each Saturday. He was a recruiting afterthought before a dominating performance during Florida's Friday Night Lights Camp earned him an offer from the hometown team.

Bottom line: Entering the 2013 recruiting cycle, the Gators placed a heavy emphasis on signing wide receivers, offensive linemen and linebackers. Mission accomplished. UF added six wideouts, including coveted Peach State star **Demarcus Robinson**, who the Gators stole from Clemson just before Signing Day. At LB, Florida added four prospects, including five-star **Alex Anzalone** and four-stars **Daniel McMillian** and **Matt Rolin**.

LSU

Overview: **Hayden Rettig** and **Anthony Jennings** give LSU a couple of talented options for the quarterback of the future, and **John Diarse** gives them another weapon at receiver. **Josh Boutte** and **Ethan Pocic** are stud offensive tackles.

Headliner: It is a tough choice between defensive end **Frank Herron** and cornerback **Tre'Davious White**, but Herron is already a great player with his best football ahead of him.

Sleeper: Linebacker **Melvin Jones** was targeted by LSU early and is impressive on film. A downhill linebacker that knocks ball carriers back on impact is always a good find.

Overview: Les Miles always has the Tigers near the top of the SEC in recruiting and 2013 is no different. It was a class stacked with playmakers at key positions.

TOP 20 INCOMING SEC RECRUITS

Rk.	Player	Ht./Wt.	Pos.	Hometown	School	College
1.	Robert Nkemdiche	6-5/260	DE	Loganville, Ga.	Grayson High	Ole Miss
2.	Vernon Hargreaves III	5-11/185	CB	Tampa, Fla.	Wharton	Florida
3.	Carl Lawson	6-2/253	DE	Alpharetta, Ga.	Milton	Auburn
4.	Laquon Treadwell	6-3/198	WR	Crete, Ill.	Crete-Monee	Ole Miss
5.	Jonathan Allen	6-3/263	DE	Ashburn, Va.	Stone Bridge	Alabama
6.	Reuben Foster	6-1/244	LB	Auburn, Ala.	Auburn	Alabama
7.	Laremy Tunsil	6-6/295	OT	Lake City, Fla.	Columbia	Ole Miss
8.	OJ Howard	6-6/235	TE	Autauga, Ala.	Autauga Academy	Alabama
9.	Tre'Davious White	5-11/175	CB	Shreveport, La.	Green Oaks	LSU
10.	Chris Jones	6-5/250	DE	Houston, Miss.	Houston	Ole Miss
11.	Frank Herron	6-5/260	DE	Memphis	Central	LSU
12.	Montravius Adams	6-3/290	DT	Vienna, Ga.	Dooly County	Auburn
13.	Alex Anzalone	6-3/229	LB	Wyomissing, Pa.	Wyomissing Area	Florida
14.	A'Shawn Robinson	6-4/320	DT	Fort Worth, Texas	Arlington Heights	Alabama
15.	Derrick Henry	6-3/243	RB	Yulee, Fla.	Yulee	Alabama
16.	Marquez North	6-3/205	WR	Charlotte, N.C.	Mallard Creek	Tennessee
17.	Kelvin Taylor	5-11/216	RB	Belle Glade, Fla.	Glades Day	Florida
18.	Ricky Seals-Jones	6-5/220	ATH	Sealy, Texas	Sealy	Texas A&M
19.	Tray Matthews	6-0/194	S	Newnan, Ga.	Newnan	Georgia
20.	Alvin Kamara	5-10/197	RB	Norcross, Ga.	Norcross	Alabama

Ole Miss

Overview: **Mark Dodson Jr.** and **Jordan Wilkins** are playmakers at running back who can run and catch. **Laquon Treadwell** is an elite playmaker at receiver. **Laremy Tunsil** has the potential to play on Sundays at offensive tackle. **Robert Nkemdiche** has a body and skill-set ready for the SEC at defensive end and **Antonio Conner** is one of the top safeties in the country and an enforcer in the back end.

Headliner: Nkemdiche was the consensus top player in the country and is a physical specimen. He could be a three-down defensive end at 290 pounds in the future.

Sleeper: **Evan Engram** is a tremendous athlete at the tight end position who could fit perfectly into Hugh Freeze's spread, no-huddle attack.

Overview: The Rebels came out of nowhere in 2013 to have an excellent class. Freeze proved he can recruit with the big boys in the SEC and upgraded the talent in Oxford.

Auburn

Overview: **Jeremy Johnson** has all the tools to be a difference maker at quarterback. **Johnathan Ford** and **Cameron Artis-Payne** are a couple of talented ball-carriers with differing styles. The sky is the limit for defensive tackle **Montravius Adams**, and defensive ends **Carl Lawson** and **Elijah Daniel** will bracket him.

Headliner: It could be Lawson or Adams here, but Lawson has the chance to be an elite pass rusher at the next level and change the game on every down.

Sleeper: **Peyton Barber** is an extremely talented runner with big play potential, and he has the ability to grind out tough yardage. If healthy, he could do big things.

Bottom line: Despite a coaching change, Gus Malzahn was able to reel in Adams, Daniel and Tony Stevens and hold on to Lawson and Johnson. That is impressive.

Texas A&M

Overview: The Aggies registered a top 10 finish nationally per Rivals.com and it's a class that ranks with the best in school history. Their 31 signees included a total of 15 four-star prospects and eight early enrollees who were able to enter school at mid-term and go through spring practice.

Headliner: **Ricky Seals-Jones** was the No. 3 prospect in the state of Texas and the Aggies flipped him from in-state rival Texas. He offers a unique combination of height (6-6) and speed at outside receiver and is talented enough on the hardwood to play in the Texas High School Coaches Associations' All-Star game.

Sleeper: Linebacker **Brett Wade** was considered a step slow for some schools, but he's a vicious hitter who enrolled at mid-term and had established himself on the second team by the end of the spring.

Bottom line: The move to the SEC and A&M's success on the field paid off with a class rich in both quantity and quality. With the loss of multiple NFL prospects to the draft, it's a class that has the opportunity to provide help right away on a team that's expected to make a run at the national title.

Georgia

Overview: **Brice Ramsey** has the tools to be the next great Georgia quarterback. **A.J. Turman** is a bruising runner with solid speed. JC wide receiver **Jonathon Rumph** could make an impact right away. **Brandon Kublanow** is a physical presence on the offensive line, and **John Atkins** is the same on the defensive line.

Headliner: **Tray Matthews** is hands down the top player in the class and has all-conference potential. He is a big hitter with ball skills.

Sleeper: **Shaun McGee** chose UGA over offers from Alabama and Florida and can rush the passer or play inside.

Bottom line: Georgia missed on some in-state talent late, but met needs at linebacker, cornerback, safety and wide receiver. It also met those needs with some talented players.

South Carolina

Overview: **Connor Mitch** was a big get for the Gamecocks at quarterback and could be the heir-apparent to Connor Shaw. **David Williams** is a home run threat every time he touches the ball at running back, and **Na'Ty Rodgers** is a big-time talent on the offensive line.

Headliner: Linebacker **Larenz Bryant** is the type of player that is all over the field. He defends the pass and the run and has excellent ball skills.

Sleeper: **Alan Knott** could play offensive tackle or guard in Columbia and is an athletic lineman with a high football IQ. He also has a mean streak.

Bottom line: Steve Spurrier added some big time talent on the offensive line, a big play running back, and his quarterback of the future, all while upgrading the talent on defense.

Vanderbilt

Overview: Vanderbilt's primary need was to get players who could defend and catch passes, and it accomplished that goal quite well. According to Rivals.com, VU's haul included five 3-star defensive backs, four 3-star receivers and a 4-star wideout in **Jordan Cunningham.**

Headliner: Coach James Franklin targets at least one quarterback in every class, and he landed one that everybody wanted in

Georgia's **Johnathon McCrary**.

Sleeper: VU struck out on a bunch of running backs before it pursued and landed **Ralph Webb**, but any back that tops 2,000 yards at Florida's 6A level is worth watching.

Bottom line: This was, without a doubt, VU's best recruiting effort in the era of online recruiting services. Franklin managed to win nine games in the Southeastern Conference with the previous staff's recruits — classes that were ranked 90th, 71st, 61st and 70th, respectively, by Rivals between 2008 and 2011. What will he do now that he has players coveted by a lot of the nation's top programs?

Tennessee

Overview: **Riley Ferguson** and **Joshua Dobbs** have the tools to be the quarterback of the future in Knoxville. **MarQuez North** is an elite talent at receiver with great size and speed.

Headliner: North had some injury problems his senior year, but he has the potential to be a No. 1 receiver in the SEC.

Sleeper: Wide receiver **Ryan Jenkins** is a defensive back's nightmare. He has a great burst, good speed, runs crisp routes, and is an explosive leaper.

Bottom line: Butch Jones was hired late in the process, but he got a couple of big, late pickups in North and defensive lineman **Jason Carr**. He was also able to hold on to previous commitments and sign a solid class.

Mississippi State

Overview: Dan Mullen's fifth recruiting class in Starkville finished just outside the Top 25 in the Rivals.com team rankings at No. 26 overall. But Mullen and staff were still able to address every need they had at quarterback, wide receiver and cornerback.

Headliner: The Bulldogs fended off a late push by Ole Miss to keep long-time five-star defensive end **Chris Jones**. Jones blew up on the all-star circuit to finish as the nation's No. 2 defensive end.

Sleeper: Keep an eye on three-star wide receiver **De'Runnya Wilson.** The 6-6, 220-pounder only played one full year of varsity football but proved to be a big-time playmaker.

Bottom line: While Mississippi State's class may not have made national headlines, the Bulldogs quietly put together another solid class and continued Mullen's focus of landing most of the top in-state targets, including the top overall player in Jones.

Arkansas

Overview: Arkansas went through a coaching transition in December with the hiring of Bret Bielema from Wisconsin. He brought in a staff that is built to recruit, and they closed strong with commitments from running back **Alex Collins**, tackle **Denver Kirkland** and guard **Reeve Koehler**, all four-star recruits.

Headliner: In the BCS age, the Hogs have never gone into Florida and pulled out a coveted four-star prospect who was sought by all major in-state programs. With only weeks to work, Bielema's new staff did it twice by landing Collins out of Plantation and Kirkland out of Miami.

Sleeper: Even though he caught 83 passes for 1,122 yards and 14 touchdowns to go with 82 rushes for 765 yards and 19 scores, Greenwood (Ark.) athlete **Drew Morgan** was vastly overlooked. He helped the Bulldogs to 38 wins in a row, to go with three consecutive state titles.

Bottom line: In a brief period, Arkansas offered a taste of things to come with the addition of big-time recruiters on staff such as Sam Pittman from Tennessee, Charlie Partridge from Wisconsin, Joel Thomas from Washington, Michael Smith from Kansas State and former Miami head coach Randy Shannon.

Kentucky

Overview: **Reese Philips** is a quarterback with a great frame and solid potential. **Jojo Kemp** is a dynamic scatback-type with some power. Defensive ends **Jason Hatcher** and **Za'Darius Smith** will give the pass rush a boost.

Headliner: Hatcher was once committed to USC but ended up staying close to home to play for the Wildcats. He has tremendous pass rushing ability and athleticism.

Sleeper: **Jaleel Hytchye** has excellent speed and ideal length at cornerback and could be a lockdown defender in the future.

Bottom line: Mark Stoops became Kentucky's coach just months before Signing Day and upgraded the talent. Kentucky fans should be excited about what he can do with a full cycle.

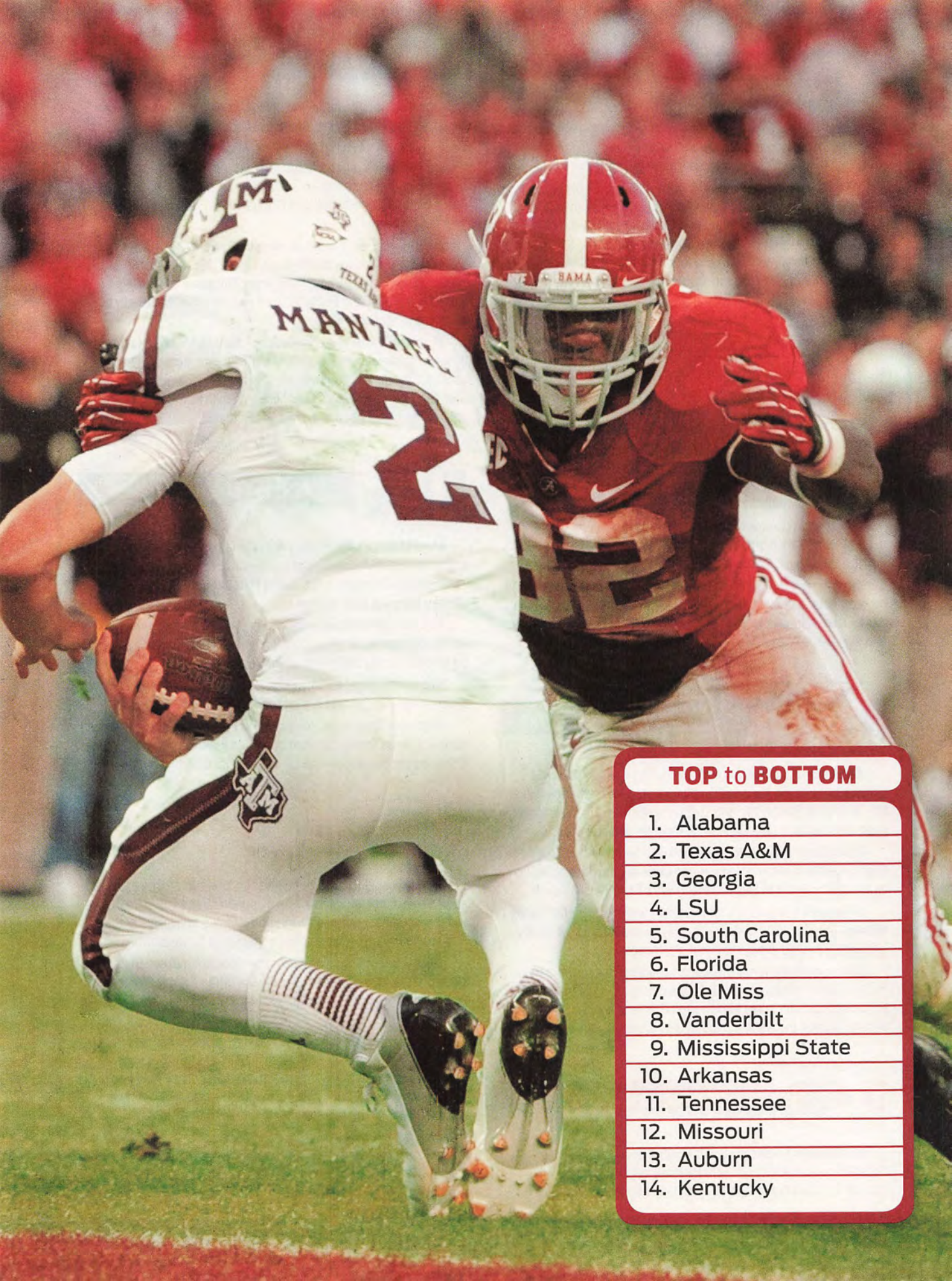
Missouri

Overview: Mizzou landed just one four-star prospect, according to Rivals.com, and at this time it appears unlikely that Fort Zumwalt South standout **Chase Abbington** is going to qualify. Eighteen of the remaining 19 prospects were ranked as three-stars.

Headliner: Assuming Abbington does not make it, the highest profile player is probably quarterback **Eddie Printz**. Printz was an all-state selection in Georgia and Mizzou's first headliner in SEC country.

Sleeper: In a deep class in the state of Missouri for linebackers, Jeff City product **Joe Burkett** qualifies here. Burkett kept his weight down in high school in order to participate as a pole vaulter during track season, but with a year or two in a college strength program, he could be the next Jay to make it big on the next level.

Bottom line: By the rankings, this is not a class that will make Mizzou's move up the SEC standings easier. The Tigers will either have to pick it up on the recruiting trail or prove the experts who do the rankings very wrong.



TOP to BOTTOM

1. Alabama
2. Texas A&M
3. Georgia
4. LSU
5. South Carolina
6. Florida
7. Ole Miss
8. Vanderbilt
9. Mississippi State
10. Arkansas
11. Tennessee
12. Missouri
13. Auburn
14. Kentucky

Stacked Again, SEC Won't Be Cakewalk for Crimson Tide

Alabama coach Nick Saban was in an enviable — yet difficult — position last year.

Twice before, Saban had a chance to repeat as a national champion. He was unable to do so at LSU in 2004 and at Alabama in 2010. But he figured it out last season as the Crimson Tide became the first team to win back-to-back BCS national championships since the system was formed in 1998.

Alabama's mauling of Notre Dame gave the Tide a third national title in four years. And with the talent returning, Alabama is not only the favorite to win the SEC again, but to claim yet another national crown.

It won't be easy. The SEC has five other teams — Georgia, Texas A&M, LSU, Florida and South Carolina — that won at least 10 games.

In the West, Alabama will have to fight off rival LSU and the Aggies, the only team to beat Bama last year. A&M returns a prolific offense, led by Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Johnny Manziel. LSU must rebuild its defense and hope QB Zach Mettenberger plays well.

No other team in the West will contend.

Georgia has won the East two years in a row and is led by record-setting quarterback Aaron Murray and tailbacks Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall.

South Carolina has beaten Georgia in each of the past two years, but hasn't been able to regain the East crown it wore in 2010. Two capable quarterbacks and the nation's best defensive player, Jadeveon Clowney, give USC a shot.

Florida bounced back from a 7-6 season to go 11-2 with wins over Texas A&M, LSU, South Carolina and Florida State. But the Gators must improve on offense.

EAST DIVISION

Georgia lost 10 defensive players who made at least two starts. While the defense won't be as stout, the offense should be outstanding. Murray, Marshall and Gurley are joined by a solid receiving corps and five offensive line starters.

Steve Spurrier has won 11 games two years in a row — a remarkable feat at a school that had one previous 10-win season. Quarterbacks Connor Shaw and Dylan Thompson were effective last year, and the defense will again be solid.

Florida had the nation's No. 5-ranked defense, but the offense was 104th. Quarterback Jeff Driskel showed flashes of brilliance but wasn't consistent in the passing game, and the Gators lose 1,000-yard rusher Mike Gillislee.

Vanderbilt won nine games for the first

Southeastern Conference Picks

SEC EAST	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. Georgia	Aaron Murray only SEC QB to have three 3,000-yard passing seasons; talented RBs.	Lost two best DL, two best LBs; haven't beaten South Carolina since 2009.	Dawgs have enough offense to overcome defensive deficiencies and take another swing in title game.
2. South Carolina	Two capable QBs (Connor Shaw, Dylan Thompson) and one great DE (Jadeveon Clowney).	Lost star RB Marcus Lattimore, big play WR Ace Sanders; has to play at Georgia.	SC has won 11 games in two straight seasons; could totally see that becoming three in a row.
3. Florida	QB Jeff Driskel showed flashes of stardom; defense will be elite again.	Lost 1,000-yard rusher Mike Gillislee; team lacks a playmaker at receiver.	Hard to match 11-win season but Gators' defense makes them East contender.
4. Vanderbilt	Gained confidence from first nine-win season since 1915; new positive attitude.	Lost starting QB and 1,000-yard rusher; beat just one team with winning record.	Offense won't be as productive, but who could argue if Vandy makes a third bowl in a row?
5. Tennessee	Offense line ranks among nation's best; new coach has added excitement.	Lost most of playmakers from last year; defense was worst in school history.	Vols should be better-coached, but earning a bowl bid will be a challenge.
6. Missouri	QB James Franklin, RB Henry Josey should be healthy and ready for SEC play.	Tigers' offense, line play has to learn how to deal with SEC's elite defenses.	Not ready for SEC's prime time but offense will make strides.
7. Kentucky	New coach Mark Stoops brings new energy as 50,000 attended spring game.	Kentucky ranked no better than ninth in SEC in any major offense, defense category.	After Kentucky went 0-8 in SEC, it's not easy to project wins in this conference season, either.
SEC WEST			
1. Alabama	QB AJ McCarron, RB T.J. Yeldon, WR Amari Cooper return; defense will be excellent.	Lost three players early to NFL Draft, including 1,000-yard rusher, great CB.	Tide has enough of everything to win its fourth national title in five years.
2. Texas A&M	Heisman Trophy QB Johnny Manziel is back with plenty of other offensive weapons.	Lost outstanding OT Luke Joeckel, WR Ryan Swope (72 catches).	Only team to beat Bama last year poses biggest threat to unseat Tide in SEC.
3. LSU	Should be better passing team; very strong run game; talented defense.	Lost 11 early to NFL Draft, including two standout ends, top-notch LB.	Same as last year: If QB Zach Mettenberger plays well, LSU could bounce Bama for SEC title.
4. Ole Miss	Most weapons return from high-powered offense that averaged 31.5 points.	Expectations are higher ... and road trips to Texas, Alabama won't be fun.	Rebels have a great chance to repeat winning record and make bowl game.
5. Miss. State	Tyler Russell emerged as solid SEC QB; Rebels led SEC in turnover margin.	After 7-0 start, lost five of six; lost two strong cornerbacks and three best receivers.	If Russell can repeat last season, Bulldogs can repeat eight-win campaign.
6. Arkansas	Hired coach with winning track record at Wisconsin in Bret Bielema.	Lost QB Tyler Wilson, RB Knile Davis; defense is average at best.	Hogs should rebound from 4-8 season, but won't match Bobby Petrino's success right now.
7. Auburn	New coach Gus Malzahn runs fast-pace spread offense that produces yards and points.	Tigers don't have accomplished QB; offense was 14th in SEC, defense was 13th.	2010 national title seems like 10 years ago; patience needed for now.

time since 1915 but had just one win over a team with a winning record. Newcomer Missouri found the SEC too difficult to navigate. Tennessee and Kentucky are rebuilding with new coaches.

WEST DIVISION

AJ McCarron has won two national championships at Alabama and had a sparkling 30-3 touchdown-to-interception ratio last season. He's backed by a great running back, a solid offensive line and a stout defense.

Texas A&M has the best chance to unseat Alabama, with the elusive Johnny Manziel and other offensive weapons. The Aggies host Alabama in what could be the SEC's premier game.

LSU lost 11 players early to the NFL, but Les Miles still has enough talent to contend, if the offense improves. The Tigers have enough skill players to be productive, if Miles becomes less conservative.

Ole Miss overachieved last year. Mississippi State doesn't have the talent to compete with the West's elite. Auburn (0-8) and Arkansas (2-6) have new coaches.

— Jimmy Hyams

Most Valuable Player

Johnny Manziel
QB, Texas A&M

Offensive Player of the Year

AJ McCarron
QB, Alabama

Defensive Player of the Year

Jadeveon Clowney
DE, South Carolina

Newcomer of the Year

Robert Nkemdiche
DE, Ole Miss

HONOR ROLL

Most accurate passer	AJ McCarron	Alabama
Strongest arm	Aaron Murray	Georgia
Best scrambler	Johnny Manziel	Texas A&M
Coolest in the clutch	AJ McCarron	Alabama
Toughest to bring down	Todd Gurley	Georgia
Best hands	Amari Cooper	Alabama
Most dangerous deep threat	Amari Cooper	Alabama
Best pass blocker	Tiny Richardson	Tennessee
Best run blocker	Jake Matthews	Texas A&M
Best cover corner	Damian Swann	Georgia
Best pass rusher	Jadeveon Clowney	South Carolina
Special teams demon	Dontavis Sapp	Tennessee

Lindy's 2013 ALL-SEC Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM

QB	Johnny Manziel	So.	Texas A&M
RB	Todd Gurley	So.	Georgia
RB	T.J. Yeldon	So.	Alabama
WR	Amari Cooper	So.	Alabama
WR	Jordan Matthews	Sr.	Vanderbilt
TE	Arthur Lynch	Sr.	Georgia
C	Travis Swanson	Sr.	Arkansas
OL	Cyrus Kouandjio	Jr.	Alabama
OL	Gabe Jackson	Sr.	Mississippi State
OL	Tiny Richardson	Jr.	Tennessee
OL	Jake Matthews	Sr.	Texas A&M
AP	Marcus Murphy	Jr.	Missouri
PK	Carey Spear	Sr.	Vanderbilt

OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM

QB	AJ McCarron	Sr.	Alabama
RB	Jeremy Hill	So.	LSU
RB	Tre Mason	Jr.	Auburn
WR	Donte Moncrief	Jr.	Ole Miss
WR	Mike Evans	So.	Texas A&M
TE	Rory Anderson	Jr.	South Carolina
C	James Stone	Sr.	Tennessee
OL	La'el Collins	Jr.	LSU
OL	Ja'Wuan James	Sr.	Tennessee
OL	Chris Burnette	Sr.	Georgia
OL	Anthony Steen	Sr.	Alabama
AP	LaDarius Perkins	Sr.	Mississippi State
PK	Taylor Bertolet	So.	Texas A&M

OFFENSE - THIRD TEAM

QB	Aaron Murray	Sr.	Georgia
RB	Keith Marshall	So.	Georgia
RB	Jeff Scott	Sr.	Ole Miss
WR	Odell Beckham	Jr.	LSU
WR	Malcolm Mitchell	Jr.	Georgia
TE	Trey Burton	Sr.	Florida
C	Dillon Day	Jr.	Mississippi State
OL	Jon Halapio	Sr.	Florida
OL	A.J. Cann	Jr.	South Carolina
OL	Zach Fulton	Sr.	Tennessee
OL	Cedric Ogbuehi	Jr.	Texas A&M
AP	Andre Debose	Sr.	Florida
PK	Zach Hocker	Sr.	Arkansas

DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM

DL	Anthony Johnson	Jr.	LSU
DL	Jadeveon Clowney	Jr.	South Carolina
DL	Dominique Easley	Sr.	Florida
DL	Kelcy Quarles	Jr.	South Carolina
LB	A.J. Johnson	Jr.	Tennessee
LB	C.J. Mosley	Sr.	Alabama
LB	Denzel Nkemdiche	So.	Ole Miss
DB	Loucheiz Purifoy	Jr.	Florida
DB	Damian Swann	Jr.	Georgia
DB	E.J. Gaines	Sr.	Missouri
DB	Craig Loston	Sr.	LSU
P	Kyle Christy	Jr.	Florida

DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM

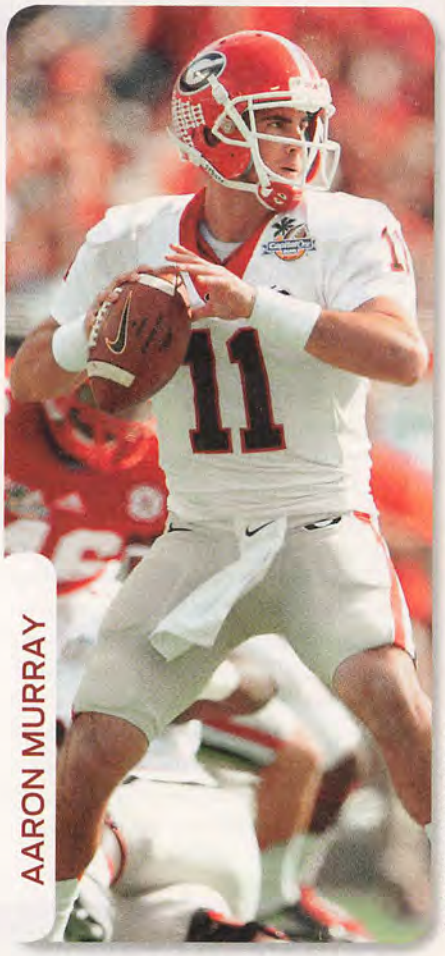
DL	Ed Stinson	Sr.	Alabama
DL	Chris Smith	Sr.	Arkansas
DL	Dante Fowler	So.	Florida
DL	Denico Autry	Sr.	Mississippi State
LB	Avery Williamson	Sr.	Kentucky
LB	Amarlo Herrera	Jr.	Georgia
LB	Adrian Hubbard	Jr.	Alabama
DB	Ha Ha Clinton-Dix	Jr.	Alabama
DB	Charles Sawyer	Sr.	Ole Miss
DB	Andre Hal	Sr.	Vanderbilt
DB	Nickoe Whitley	Sr.	Mississippi State
P	Cody Mandell	Sr.	Alabama

DEFENSE - THIRD TEAM

DL	C.J. Johnson	Jr.	Ole Miss
DL	Kony Ealy	Jr.	Missouri
DL	Chaz Sutton	Jr.	South Carolina
DL	Bud Dupree	Jr.	Kentucky
LB	Chase Garnham	Sr.	Vanderbilt
LB	Steven Jenkins	Sr.	Texas A&M
LB	Curt Maggitt	Jr.	Tennessee
DB	Victor Hampton	Jr.	South Carolina
DB	Marcus Roberson	Jr.	Florida
DB	Kenny Ladler	Sr.	Vanderbilt
DB	Deshazor Everett	Jr.	Texas A&M
P	Michael Palardy	Sr.	Tennessee

THE **BIG** ONES

Aug. 29	
North Carolina at South Carolina	Bragging rights go to winner of this SEC-ACC contest.
Aug. 31	
Alabama-Virginia Tech (Atlanta)	Tide opens vs. big-name opponent for third time in five years.
Georgia at Clemson	Defending SEC East champ takes on defending ACC champ.
LSU vs. TCU (Arlington)	Two of winningest programs since 2000 square off in Texas.
Sept. 7	
South Carolina at Georgia	Gamecocks have won three in a row, but Dawgs have won East title.
Florida at Miami	Two bitter in-state rivals play for first time since 2008.
Sept. 14	
Alabama at Texas A&M	Johnny Manziel: 345 total yards in beating the Tide last season.
Ole Miss at Texas	Upstart Rebels oppose powerhouse trying to regain swagger.
Tennessee at Oregon	Butch Jones' first road test is against Pac-12 power in rowdy Autzen.
Sept. 21	
Tennessee at Florida	Gators have won eight in a row against slump-ridden Vols.
Sept. 28	
Texas A&M at Arkansas	Former SWC rivals clash; first SEC game for Hogs' Bret Bielema.
LSU at Georgia	Key contest between highly ranked cross-division opponents.
Oct. 5	
Georgia at Tennessee	Dawgs have won four of last six at 100,000-seat Neyland Stadium.
Oct. 12	
Florida at LSU	Could be a divisional elimination game for one of these teams.
Oct. 19	
Florida at Missouri	Gators won at A&M last year, now make first trip to Missouri.
LSU at Ole Miss	With Rebels resurgence, this rivalry game has more meaning.
Oct. 26	
Tennessee at Alabama	Tide has dominated this once great rivalry, winning six straight.
Nov. 2	
Florida vs. Georgia (Jacksonville)	Dawgs forced six turnovers to hand Gators lone regular-season loss.
Nov. 9	
LSU at Alabama	Tide needed last-second drive to subdue LSU and win West.
Nov. 16	
Florida at South Carolina	Steve Spurrier has won two of last three against his alma mater.
Nov. 23	
Texas A&M at LSU	Tigers one of few teams to tame Johnny Manziel last year.
Nov. 28	
Ole Miss at Mississippi State	Rebels' Hugh Freeze won his first Egg Bowl, 41-24.
Nov. 30	
Alabama at Auburn	Iron Bowl features teams that have won last four national titles.
Florida State at Florida	Gators snapped two-game losing streak to Seminoles last year.
Clemson at South Carolina	Gamecocks have won four in a row in heated instate rivalry.



AARON MURRAY

Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

BOWL CONNECTIONS

SEC Champ
BCS (national title game if ranked #1 or #2, otherwise Sugar)

SEC #2	Capital One vs. Big Ten
SEC #3-4	Outback vs. Big Ten
SEC #3-4	Cotton vs. Big 12
SEC #5-6	Chick-fil-A vs. ACC
SEC #5-6	Gator vs. Big Ten
SEC #7-8	Music City vs. ACC
SEC #7-8	Liberty vs. Conference USA
SEC #9-10	BBVA Compass vs. Big East
SEC #9-10	AdvoCare V100 vs. ACC

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Jadeveon Clowney	DE	South Carolina	Jr.	Super pass rusher, with long arms; dominating.
2. AJ McCarron	QB	Alabama	Sr.	Smart, accurate, great decision maker.
3. Jake Matthews	OT	Texas A&M	Sr.	Moving from RT to LT, great feet.
4. C.J. Mosley	LB	Alabama	Sr.	Productive player, maybe nation's best LB.
5. Anthony Johnson	DL	LSU	Sr.	One of SEC's most disruptive defenders.
6. Dominique Easley	DL	Florida	Sr.	Can play DT, DE, tough to block at either spot.
7. Tiny Richardson	OL	Tennessee	Jr.	Excellent at pass protection, great feet, toughness.
8. Donte Moncrief	WR	Ole Miss	Jr.	At 6-2, 222, big target, good hands, route runner.
9. Loucheiz Purifoy	DB	Florida	Jr.	Outstanding two-way player, terrific athlete.
10. Jordan Matthews	WR	Vanderbilt	Sr.	He's 6-3, 205; could set SEC mark for receptions.

SEC keeps sending 'em on to Sunday

Butch Jones is going to fit into the SEC quite well, thank you, based on his ability to evaluate talent. The SEC dominated the 2013 NFL Draft, as a dozen players were drafted in the first round — most in conference history.

What's more, the first player chosen (offensive tackle Eric Fisher) was recruited to Central Michigan by Jones, who is the new coach at Tennessee.

When it rains, it pours on everybody else in college football, and in the first round, SEC players were raining down on Radio City Music Hall like they never have before.

The dozen first-rounders is 38 percent of the first-round draft picks, but who's counting? Only everybody, that's who. After the first two days of the draft, about a third of the draft picks hailed from the SEC — 32 of the 97 players selected in the first three rounds. And these are the guys that NFL teams want to build around and project as starters.

Let's translate that to a recruiting pitch, which is most assuredly being heard in the most important living rooms in the country: "In the past three years, 31 SEC players have gone in the first round ... and this year, our dozen first-rounders were more than the next two conferences combined! If you have any aspirations of playing on Sundays, why would you play anywhere else on Saturdays?"

Here's a glance at the 2013 first-rounders from the SEC:

Luke Joeckel, OT, Texas A&M
2nd to Jaguars
Barkevious Mingo, DE, LSU
6th to Bowns
Dee Milliner, CB, Alabama
9th to Jets
Chance Warmack, OG, Alabama
10th to Titans
D.J. Fluker, OT, Alabama
11th to Chargers
Sheldon Richardson, DT, Missouri
13th to Jets
Jarvis Jones, OLB, Georgia
17th to Steelers
Eric Reid, FS, LSU
18th to 49ers
Sharrif Floyd, DT, Florida
23rd to Vikings
Cordarrelle Patterson, WR, Tennessee
29th to Vikings
Alec Ogletree, ILB, Georgia
30th to Rams
Matt Elam, FS, Florida
32nd to Ravens

Turning pro

The SEC lost a record 33 underclassmen to the NFL draft, 23 more than a year ago. LSU was hit hardest with 11 departures, including defensive ends Sam Montgomery and Barkevious Mingo, running backs Spencer Ware and Michael Ford, three defensive backs and a punter.

FOUR-YEAR STANDINGS

Yep, just as you suspected, this four-year period has been pretty good for Alabama. Hard to believe that Tennessee is just one game better in league play than Vandy.

EAST	SEC	Pct.	ALL	Pct.	C/D	BCS	B	Comment
Florida	22-10	.625	39-14	.736	0/1	2	4	Bounced back into a BCS bowl.
Georgia	21-11	.656	36-18	.667	0/2	0	4	OK, everybody back on the bandwagon.
South Carolina	20-12	.625	38-15	.717	0/1	0	4	Hanging with the big boys: 31 wins in three years.
Tennessee	9-23	.281	23-27	.460	0/0	0	2	Three losing seasons weren't in seniors' plan.
Vanderbilt	8-24	.250	19-31	.380	0/0	0	2	Can the Commodores sustain something?
Kentucky	7-25	.219	20-30	.400	0/0	0	2	Optimism abounds, hard to figure why.
Missouri*	17-16	.321	31-20	.627	0/1	0	3	Conference wins are harder to come by now.

WEST	SEC	Pct.	ALL	Pct.	C/D	BCS	B	Comment
Alabama	27-5	.875	49-5	.907	2/2	3	4	Rare is the senior class with win pct. over 90.
LSU	25-7	.781	43-10	.811	1/1	1	4	Rare is the senior class with win pct. over 80.
Arkansas	17-15	.531	33-18	.647	0/0	1	3	Which way, Razorbacks?
Auburn	15-17	.469	33-19	.635	1/1	1	3	Take out 2010 season, 7-17 in SEC games.
Mississippi State	13-19	.406	29-22	.569	0/0	0	3	24 wins in three years is a nice run in Starkville.
Ole Miss	8-24	.250	22-28	.440	0/0	0	2	Big bounce in 2012, still lots of work to do.
Texas A&M*	19-14	.576	33-19	.635	0/0	0	4	Aggies pad win total since moving to SEC!?

Notes: C=Championship or co-championship; D=Division title; BCS=BCS bowls; B=Bowls; *Missouri & Texas A&M spent 2009-11 in Big 12.

Tennessee and Florida lost four each, Alabama and Georgia three, Arkansas, South Carolina and Texas A&M two, and Missouri and Auburn one each.

The Vols lost the most skill on offense in quarterback Tyler Bray and receivers Justin Hunter and Cordarrelle Patterson. The Gators are without defensive tackle Sharrif Floyd, linebacker Jelani Jenkins, safety Matt Elam and tight end Jordan Reed.

Alabama lost cornerback Dee Milliner, running back Eddie Lacy and offensive tackle D.J. Fluker. Georgia is minus linebackers Jarvis Jones and Alec Ogletree, and nose tackle Kwame Geathers.

Other key losses were offensive tackle Luke Joeckel at Texas A&M, running back Marcus Lattimore at South Carolina, defensive end Corey Lemonier at Auburn, defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson at Missouri and running back Knile Davis at Arkansas.

Coaching Changes

The league has created some amazing success stories, but for every win in league play, there is a loss. Too many of those latter things and a program has to make a change.

Four teams made changes at the head coaching position (you know all about those), but the SEC also made massive, and key, changes at the coordinator positions.

In addition to the coaching turnover at Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas and Auburn, three other programs have new offensive coordinators — Missouri (Josh Henson), LSU (Cam Cameron) and Texas A&M (John Spavital), and two have new defensive coordinators — Florida (D.J. Durkin) and Mississippi State (Geoff Collins).

If you've been following that math, that leaves only five schools that have the same set of coordinators as last season — Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Vanderbilt and Ole Miss.

Non-conference foes

The first and last weekends of the regular season feature some outstanding non-conference encounters.

On Aug. 29, South Carolina again opens the season with a Thursday night game on ESPN, facing North Carolina. It's one of three SEC vs. ACC matchups the first weekend of the season.

For the third time under Nick Saban, Alabama is playing in one of the premier early season games, this time, facing Virginia Tech in the Chick-fil-A Kickoff Classic in Atlanta on Aug. 31.

Also on Aug. 31, Mississippi State opposes Oklahoma State in Houston, Georgia visits rival Clemson in a potential top 10 battle, and LSU tackles TCU in Cowboys Stadium.

Fast forwarding to the end ...

On Nov. 30, three of the great in-state non-conference rivalries in America have Florida hosting Florida State, Georgia visiting in-state rival Georgia Tech, and South Carolina at home against Clemson. The Gamecocks have won four in a row over the Tigers, prompting Steve Spurrier to quip that Clemson just doesn't seem to play well against his team.

There are other highlights — Florida-Miami, Tennessee-Oregon, Ole Miss-Texas, Louisville-Kentucky — but also a lot of snoozers out of conference.

SEC Fans Passionate

SEC fans turn out in record numbers to watch regular-season games. They attend spring games, as well. Seven teams drew more than 45,000 fans.

Auburn was the SEC pacesetter, attracting a record 83,401 to Gus Malzahn's first spring. That's 40,000 more than last year. Two-time defending national Alabama had 78,315 (routine in the Nick Saban era), while Tennessee drew 61,076 — second most in school history — for Butch Jones' first spring game.

Kentucky had more than 50,000 for new coach Mark Stoops after having 4,500 the year before. Kentucky's largest regular-season crowd last year was 43,174 for the opener against Western Kentucky.

Arkansas also had over 50,000 to watch Bret Bielema's spring debut — a 6,000 increase.

Texas A&M attracted 45,212 to watch Johnny Manziel, 30,000 more than last year.

Moving down the list: Georgia (45,113), South Carolina (35,218), LSU (28,000), Ole Miss (28,000) and Mississippi State (21,000). Missouri's crowd (18,384) was similar to the previous year. Vanderbilt (14,000) had a 5,500 hike.

The surprise was Florida, which went from 7-6 to 11-1 on the field, but had just 10,000 show up for the spring game after getting 38,100 in 2012.

Extra points

•Arkansas coach Bret Bielema noted he had a better Big Ten record at Wisconsin than Nick Saban had at Michigan State. Saban, who has won three of the last four national championships at Alabama, declined to respond. C'mon, Nick. Bielema said he was joking. Of course, Saban doesn't spend a lot of time making levity ... the joke might be on Arkansas when it plays at Alabama on Oct. 19.

• The SEC has won seven consecutive national championships and eight of the past 11 since the league expanded in 1992. Since the BCS was formed in 1998, the SEC has won nine national titles. No other conference has more than two. Before the SEC expanded in 1992, the league had gone 11 years without a national title and had another drought from 1966-1977.

• The SEC and ESPN have reached an agreement on an SEC Network that will kickoff off in August 2014. With the SEC's new ESPN/CBS package and the Champions Bowl game against the Big 12 winner, the SEC's revenue-sharing plan is expected to pay each member school between $30-35 million in 2014-15. It paid $20.1 million this past year.

• The SEC has had two teams in a BCS bowl seven years in a row and has taken eight of the last 14 slots in the national title game.

• South Carolina has back-to-back 11-win seasons. Before Steve Spurrier's arrival, the Gamecocks had one 10-win season.

• After ESPN televised Southern Cal's Pro Day live — and not South Carolina's — Spurrier pointed out that the East Coast's USC won 11 games, won a bowl game and finished in the Top 10, while the West Coast's USC went 7-6, lost in a bowl game and was unranked. Spurrier joked that maybe South Carolina should play its opener on Fox Networks' new 24-hour all-sports channel.

• Vanderbilt won nine games for the first time since 1915, an admirable achievement. But a word of caution: Only one of those wins came against a team with a winning record.

• The SEC has won at least five bowls for seven years in a row.

• LSU's Les Miles has had six 10-win seasons in eight years; the Tigers had seven in school history before that stretch.

• Tennessee has lost 34 games since the start of the 2008 season, the most in a four-year stretch in school history. And the Vols have had three straight seven-loss seasons, another record for futility.

RATING **THE SEC**

QUARTERBACKS

1. TEXAS A&M
2. ALABAMA
3. GEORGIA
4. SOUTH CAROLINA
5. OLE MISS
6. FLORIDA
7. LSU
8. MISSISSIPPI STATE
9. MISSOURI
10. AUBURN
11. TENNESSEE
12. ARKANSAS
13. KENTUCKY
14. VANDERBILT

Call it the Conference of Quarterbacks.

Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel came out of nowhere to lead Texas A&M to a shocking 11-win season, a No. 5 ranking and the lone victory over Alabama in the Aggies' first SEC season.

Manziel twice set SEC single-game records for total yards and accumulated 3,706 passing yards, an SEC-best 1,410 yards rushing and accounted for 47 touchdowns. Not bad for a guy who wasn't the starter coming out of spring ball.

AJ McCarron has won back-to-back national championships at Alabama and had a brilliant 30-3 touchdown-to-interception ratio last season while leading the nation in passing efficiency.

Georgia's Aaron Murray led the SEC with 3,893 passing yards and should set multiple SEC career records. South Carolina got solid play from a two-quarterback system as the mobile Connor Shaw and pocket passer Dylan Thompson both ranked in the top seven in the SEC in passing efficiency.

Bo Wallace sparked Ole Miss with almost 3,000 passing yards. Florida's Jeff Driskel showed flashes of brilliance, but was too inconsistent as a passer. LSU hopes Zach Mettenberger picks up where he left off after a slow start.

RUNNING BACKS

1. GEORGIA
2. ALABAMA
3. LSU
4. TEXAS A&M
5. MISSISSIPPI STATE
6. AUBURN
7. OLE MISS
8. FLORIDA
9. SOUTH CAROLINA
10. MISSOURI
11. KENTUCKY
12. TENNESSEE
13. VANDERBILT
14. ARKANSAS

Despite losing four 1,000-yard rushers, the SEC is once again loaded at running back. Nobody has a better pair than Georgia, led by SEC-leading returning rusher Todd Gurley (1,385 yards) and Keith Marshall.

Alabama's explosive T.J. Yeldon gained 1,108 yards (6.3 per carry) despite being a backup to Eddie Lacy last year. The Tide also has Kenyan Drake, Jalston Fowler and freshman Derrick Henry.

LSU lost two to the pros early, yet Jeremy Hill powered his way for 755 yards and Alfred Blue Jr., coming off an injury, might be better. Kenny Hilliard is also talented.

Ben Malena (808 yards) is one of a full stable of Texas A&M backs, including transfers from Oregon and Oklahoma. Mississippi State's LaDarius Perkins is one of four 1,000-yard tailbacks returning to the league.

Auburn's Tre Mason just made it to four digits, with 1,002 yards, averaging 5.9 per carry. He might be more productive in a new spread system. Jeff Scott had 846 yards for Ole Miss. Florida's Matt Jones and Kelvin Taylor aim to replace 1,000-yard rusher Mike Gillislee.

South Carolina's Mike Davis has 1,000-yard potential as he tries to fill Marcus Lattimore's shoes.

Missouri hopes Henry Josey (1,168 yards in 2011) has recovered from a devastating knee injury.

RECEIVERS

1. ALABAMA
2. LSU
3. VANDERBILT
4. GEORGIA
5. MISSOURI
6. TEXAS A&M
7. OLE MISS
8. FLORIDA
9. SOUTH CAROLINA
10. ARKANSAS
11. TENNESSEE
12. AUBURN
13. MISSISSIPPI STATE
14. KENTUCKY

Alabama's Amari Cooper burst onto the scene as a freshman in the second half of last year as he caught 59 passes for 1,000 yards and 11 touchdowns. He torched Georgia in the SEC title game and Notre Dame in the national championship game. One SEC coach compared him to Jerry Rice. Kenny Bell, Kevin Norwood, DeAndrew White, Chris Black and Christion Jones give Alabama the SEC's best collection of wideouts.

LSU has two gifted receivers in Jarvis Landry (56 catches) and Odell Beckham (43). Vanderbilt's Jordan Matthews (94 catches) and Chris Boyd (50) have the most returning catches for a duo in the SEC.

Georgia's Malcolm Mitchell, committed to playing offense now, is an outstanding talent and Michael Bennett is dependable. Marcus Lucas led Missouri with 46 catches and he's joined by fast-rising Dorial Green-Beckham, the nation's No. 1 recruit in 2012, who had 28 catches last season, and L'Damian Washington (25).

Mike Evans led Texas A&M in receptions (82) as a freshman. Ole Miss' Donte Moncrief (66 for 979) is one of the SEC's premier playmakers. He was one of three SEC receivers with at least 10 TD catches. South Carolina is led by two-sport star Bruce Ellington, who caught the game-winning touchdown pass in the bowl game against Michigan.

OFFENSIVE LINE

1. TENNESSEE
2. ALABAMA
3. FLORIDA
4. TEXAS A&M
5. GEORGIA
6. MISSISSIPPI STATE
7. OLE MISS
8. AUBURN
9. LSU
10. VANDERBILT
11. SOUTH CAROLINA
12. ARKANSAS
13. MISSOURI
14. KENTUCKY

Tennessee improved its running attack from 90 yards per game to 160 and allowed an SEC-low eight sacks. UT has an outstanding tackle tandem in Tiny Richardson and Ja'Wuan James, each a likely high draft choice. Center James Stone and guard Zack Fulton should also be selected.

Alabama loses three starters, but tackle Cyrus Kouandjio, guard Anthony Steen and center Ryan Kelly form a formidable nucleus for a team that was No. 2 in the SEC in rushing. Florida managed to rank No. 3 in the SEC in rushing despite an erratic passing attack. Jon Halapio, D.J. Humphries, Max Garcia and Chaz Green anchor a strong run-blocking unit.

Texas A&M, which led the SEC in rushing, is without star tackle Luke Joeckel, but Jake Matthews could be a first-rounder and two other starters return. Georgia returns all five starters, led by John Theus, David Andrews, Chris Burnette and Kenarious Gates. Theus is making the adjustment from right tackle to left tackle.

Mississippi State returns four starters, including one of the SEC's top offensive linemen in three-year starter Gabe Jackson and center Dillon Day. Ole Miss and Auburn also return four starters. LSU lost both tackles, but returns All-SEC candidate La'el Collins.

Bama's offense to steal the show?

DEFENSIVE LINE

1. SOUTH CAROLINA
2. FLORIDA
3. ALABAMA
4. LSU
5. ARKANSAS
6. TENNESSEE
7. AUBURN
8. OLE MISS
9. MISSISSIPPI STATE
10. KENTUCKY
11. GEORGIA
12. MISSOURI
13. TEXAS A&M
14. VANDERBILT

South Carolina defensive end Jadeveon Clowney projects to be the No. 1 overall pick in next year's draft. He had 13 of the Gamecock's SEC-leading 43 sacks and registered 23.5 tackles for loss. Chaz Sutton (five sacks) and tackle Kelcy Quarles help give the Gamecocks a rugged front four.

Florida, No. 2 in the SEC in run defense last year, is led by Dominique Easley, who is moving from end to tackle. Dante Fowler is a strong pass rusher, and end Ronald Powell could be disruptive if he recovers from two ACL surgeries.

Alabama, which led the nation in run defense (76.4 yards per game) has two stalwarts in its 3-4 with Ed Stinson and Jeoffrey Pagan. LSU has a solid pair of defensive tackles in Anthony Johnson and Ego Ferguson, but lost two excellent pass rushing ends.

Among returning players, only Clowney had more sacks than Arkansas' Chris Smith (9.5). Trey Flowers (six sacks) is another good end. Tennessee has six senior linemen, led by massive Daniel McCullers and end Jacques Smith.

Auburn should have one of the league's most improved fronts, led by Dee Ford (six sacks), Angelo Blackson and Gabe Wright. Ole Miss, second in sacks with 38, returns C.J. Johnson and Issac Gross.

LINEBACKERS

1. ALABAMA
2. TENNESSEE
3. GEORGIA
4. OLE MISS
5. FLORIDA
6. LSU
7. TEXAS A&M
8. SOUTH CAROLINA
9. KENTUCKY
10. VANDERBILT
11. MISSISSIPPI STATE
12. ARKANSAS
13. MISSOURI
14. AUBURN

This is not a strong position in the SEC compared to defensive linemen and defensive backs.

Alabama is always well stocked at linebacker. C.J. Mosley (107 tackles) might be the best in the nation and spearheads a defense that led the SEC in rushing, passing, scoring and yards allowed. Adrian Hubbard (seven sacks) is disruptive and Trey DePriest is solid.

Although Tennessee had the SEC's worst defense a year ago, middle linebacker A.J. Johnson led the league in tackles with 138, but needs to make more big plays. OLB Curt Maggitt is a strong pass rusher. Dontavis Sapp was the most improved player in the spring.

Georgia lost two star linebackers in Jarvis Jones and Alec Ogletree, but returns Amarlo Herrera and a rising star in Jordan Jenkins. Ole Miss' Denzel Nkemdiche, a Freshman All-American, made 82 stops last year and is one of the SEC's best young linebackers. The Rebels hope oft-injured D.J. Shackleford returns to form.

Florida has a fine young linebacker in Antonio Morrison. LSU has two solid linebackers in Lamin Barrow (fifth in tackles at 104) and Tahj Jones.

Kentucky's Avery Williamson was second in the SEC in tackles (135).

SECONDARY

1. FLORIDA
2. ALABAMA
3. VANDERBILT
4. OLE MISS
5. ARKANSAS
6. LSU
7. AUBURN
8. SOUTH CAROLINA
9. TEXAS A&M
10. GEORGIA
11. TENNESSEE
12. MISSOURI
13. MISSISSIPPI STATE
14. KENTUCKY

Florida had one of the best interception-to-touchdowns allowed ratios in the nation, recording 20 picks against seven TDs, as the Gators led the conference in pass-defensive efficiency.

Cornerback Loucheiz Purifoy, who has doubled as a wide receiver, is in the discussion as the best cover corner in the league. Marcus Roberson is the other corner. The Gators lost both safeties but have athletes, including Jaylen Watkins.

Alabama (18 interceptions) has one of the SEC's top safety rotations, led by Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, whose five interceptions tied for the league lead. Deion Belue is an up-and-comer at corner.

Vanderbilt, third in the SEC in pass defense a year ago, has two of the better DBs in the SEC — corner Andre Hal (16 passes defended) and Kenny Ladler (90 tackles). Vandy was one of three SEC teams to allow fewer than 10 TD passes.

Ole Miss has five starters returning, led by corner/safety Charles Sawyer. Arkansas and Auburn return four each. Some NFL scouts have compared LSU's Craig Loston to former Tiger star Eric Reid. Ronald Martin is a solid safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

1. FLORIDA
2. MISSOURI
3. ALABAMA
4. VANDERBILT
5. MISSISSIPPI STATE
6. TEXAS A&M
7. AUBURN
8. TENNESSEE
9. LSU
10. OLE MISS
11. KENTUCKY
12. GEORGIA
13. SOUTH CAROLINA
14. ARKANSAS

Florida was one of only two SEC teams to rank in the top four in both kickoff returns and punt returns, thanks primarily to Andre Debose, who has five career returns for touchdowns. The Gators also have the best punter in the SEC in Kyle Christy (SEC-best 45.8 yards per punt last year).

Florida has also been adept at blocking kicks under Will Muschamp. The lone uncertainty is the place-kicker.

Marcus Murphy helped Missouri lead the SEC in kick return average and punt return average. Murphy was second in the league in punt returns (13.9 with three touchdowns) and fifth in kick returns (24.1, one TD). He had 832 return yards. Kicker Andrew Baggett hit 14 of 20 field goal attempts. The Tigers are searching for a punter.

Alabama was third in SEC kick returns and seventh in punt returns, and Cody Mandell averaged 44.3 yards per punt, fifth in the league. But Bama lost a kicker who was 11 of 11 on field goal attempts. Coverage units are usually good.

Vanderbilt is strong at special teams, including Jonathan Krause, who was fourth in punt returns (11.2), with two scores. Carey Spear hit 20 of 24 field-goal attempts.

THE STATE OF THE GAME

EVOLUTION, SUPERCONFERENCES, POWER STRUGGLES AND $$$$ ... THROUGH IT ALL, THE GAME THRIVES

BY DENNIS DODD | Photo by Steve Mitchell-USA TODAY Sports

And after the seventh SEC championship, college football rested. Or something like that.

There was an audible sigh of relief as the sport — still admittedly tilted in the SEC's favor — regained its footing in the offseason. Well, a sigh if you happened to be in a number of luxury hotels, back rooms and press conferences, as conference commissioners and TV executives figured out just what the Manziel they were doing.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GOR

Conference realignment is, for now, all but dead thanks to the ACC's "grant of rights agreement" in April. It's a contract among the teams that gives their TV rights to the conference, which means their big checks are locked into the conference.

Conference realignment for the foreseeable future died in April when ACC commissioner John Swofford got his members to pledge allegiance. That grant of rights means if conference members leave for another league, their TV rights — and tens of millions of dollars — don't follow. Those rights are retained by their conference.

That created the good kind of gridlock, because the power conferences have essentially become media conglomerates. You are who you network with. The Big Ten Network set the standard. The Pac-12 Networks are less than a year old. The ACC is thinking about a network. The SEC Network is set to launch in August 2014.

Everyone's fat, happy and rich.

Big Ten members agreed to a grant of rights in 1988. The Big 12 — after a couple of contentious years — are good with a GOR until the end of its TV deal in 2025. The Pac-12 has one. The only BCS league that doesn't have one is the SEC. And you've got to be crazy to leave the SEC.

LONG LIVE THE CFP (AND WHATEVER COMES NEXT)

The BCS is dead.

Long live the CFP!

Take your final shots at the Bowl Championship Series. This is it. The long debated, constructed and molded four-team College Football Playoff will debut in 2014. The commissioners spent the offseason finalizing the who, what, when, where and why of the

model. The only piece left — a significant one — is getting the selection committee in place. You know, to actually pick the teams.

On the field, it remains the SEC's world and we're only living in it.

Alabama is going for an unprecedented third BCS championship and fourth in five years. Texas A&M became the conference's latest rising power in its first year in the league. Oh, and the Heisman rests in the SEC for the third time in four years.

If that isn't enough, the SEC goes for the snowman this season — an eighth consecutive championship.

THESE ARE THE (NEW) GOOD OLD DAYS

It is a great time to be a viewer, a fan, a player, a commissioner and alive. The sport has never been better — or healthier or wealthier.

Unlike top basketball programs that have to rebuild themselves each year because of the one-and-done rule, college football has a more lasting attraction. One of the biggest storylines of the season remains tracking Johnny Football to see if he can become Johnny Repeat.

The power conferences are, well, in power. There has been talk about those leagues (SEC, ACC, Big 12, Pac-12, Big Ten) breaking away from the NCAA and forming their own association. In essence, that has already happened and everyone seems to be good with it.

In the playoff era, the large majority of national championships and more than 70 percent of the playoff money will flow to those five power leagues, just like it does now.

Perhaps it's time to drop the pretense and admit that at the highest level the game is preparing young men for their chosen profession — football, basketball or whatever. We can debate semantics — stipend? — we're headed toward at least paying athletes *something*, aren't we?

The NCAA may not even be a part of this bold, new world. How's that for an unintended consequence? The BCS started innocently 15 years ago with a championship game and not much else. Postseason evolution sometimes wasn't pretty, but in some strange wonderful way, we got through this era of the sport's evolution with only minor flesh wounds.

THOSE SCARY SUPERCONFERENCES FEEL NORMAL

Remember the continual threat of SuperConferences destroying the traditional and geographic connections of the sport? For better or worse, you're looking at 'em. And it's not so bad, after all.

Still, don't think about the size of conferences as much as the earning power.

Finances have grown to the point that even within that 65-team BCS conference group, there is a subset. The SEC and Big Ten will be granted more automatic berths during the 12 years of the playoff agreement than the other conferences. That makes sense since those two leagues accounted for most of the BCS berths to date.

But also consider the ACC. In November, it looked like it was teetering on the edge of existence. The Big Ten's Jim Delaney rocked the ACC's world by taking Maryland (along with Rutgers). The hot rumor became that the Big Ten commissioner would then deal a death blow by taking some combination of Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia Tech.

But the center held, thanks to the ACC's grant of rights agreement. See?

REALIGNMENT SETTLES DOWN

The madness is winding down. Rivalries have ended. Relationships have been tested. West Virginia is flying 1,000 miles for a conference game. Texas and Texas A&M are 110 miles apart and, for now, will never play each other.

The commissioners, fans, media, everyone — even ESPN — are tired of conference realignment.

"The best evidence I can posit to you now," said Burke Magnus, senior vice president, college sports programming, "is that it has done nothing but cost us money."

And if it costs ESPN money, that is not a good thing for ESPN.

The ACC's move rendered moot Big 12 expansion talk, given that Florida State and Clemson are legally bound to the suddenly stable conference. The same goes for the Pac-12 raiding the Big 12.

Never say never, if only because there is the feeling Texas would never sign an agreement it didn't know how to get out of, but things do look settled. The only moveable parts at this point seem to be Cincinnati and/or Connecticut of the American Athletic Conference moving up to a BCS league.

"I just don't see movement happening among the members of the five power conferences — for a long time," Swofford said.

THE POWER (AND CASH) TRICKLED DOWN ...

It seems a minor point now that the BCS created college football upstarts who otherwise would have never gotten the chance. Since 2004, Boise State rose to prominence. So did Utah and Urban Meyer, and TCU and Gary Patterson. Utah and TCU made it through the filter into power leagues. The talents of Meyer and Patterson now have them coaching in those power conferences.

All of it unintended by the BCS and, perhaps soon, unremembered. In 2003, Tulane president Scott Cowen threatened the system — and won. Who recalls that the *New York Times* and Associated Press — great news organizations that cover the BCS — were once part of it with their rankings?

In 2004, Auburn got screwed. Other times, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Alabama didn't win conference titles and played for national championships.

"Death to the BCS" got written. The power brokers were not so much changed by it; they adjusted to it. They responded to the outrage by creating a playoff — not without some caution. One commissioner last year was approached by a fan and personally handed a playoff idea.

"Here, you want it?" he said, holding the multi-page proposal out to me, knowing that if he actually looked at it the fan could one day have sued for some sort of copyright infringement.

... BUT IT'S NO 'LEVEL PLAYING FIELD'

No improvement of the sport's postseason was going to come without admitting the obvious: There are those who have invested more in the sport than others.

The ongoing thought has been that Alabama and USC and Notre Dame and Michigan deserved more because they had been a power for, oh, eight decades. Boise State didn't because it had been a factor for eight years.

That was pretty much it. A matter of investment, demographics, fan following and market share.

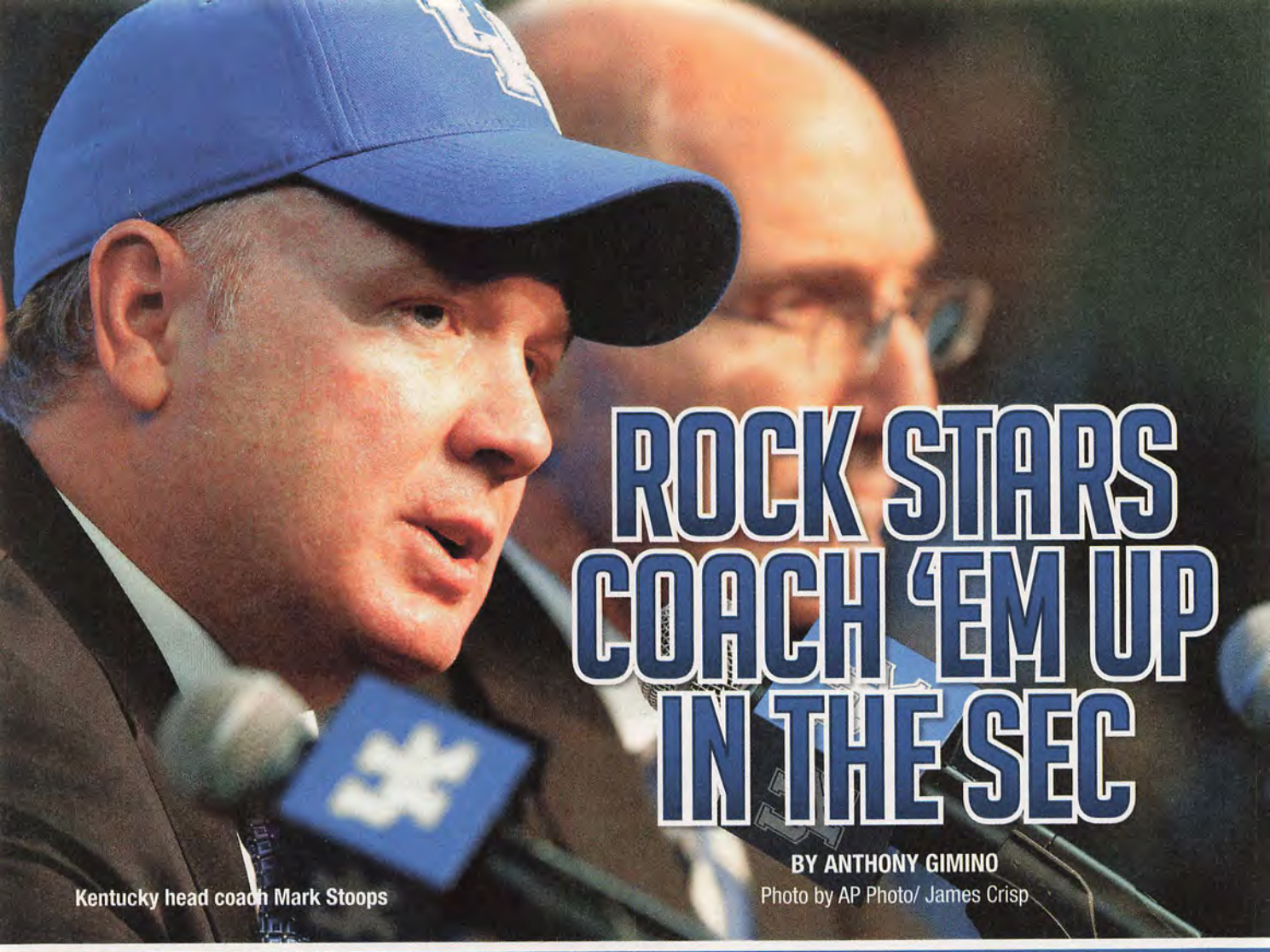
As we transition to the playoff era, that line has been drawn almost exactly in the middle of what is now the 125 schools of the FBS. The sport subdivided over the past 15 years with the 65 schools in those power conferences controlling the overwhelming majority of the revenue. A decade-and-a-half later, those power schools have even less in common with their smaller, poorer brethren.

The divide is wide and getting wider. In the new playoff era beginning in 2014, BCS conferences will take home $90 million each annually without snapping a football. The Group of Five non-BCS conferences (American Athletic Conference, Mountain West, MAC, Conference USA, Sun Belt) will get an average of $17.3 million.

The wonder of it all is that despite those inequalities, Louisiana-Lafayette can come within a few plays of winning at Florida. Louisiana-Monroe *can* win at Arkansas. Boise State — now a recognized Top 25 program — is the standard for the disenfranchised.

Maybe the biggest unintended consequence of the BCS is that it has delivered honest-to-goodness Cinderellas in a era dominated by a few choice programs.

And in some strange, wonderful way, we love them all.



Kentucky head coach Mark Stoops

ROCK STARS COACH 'EM UP IN THE SEC

BY ANTHONY GIMINO

Photo by AP Photo/ James Crisp

Kentucky coach Mark Stoops kept hearing the projected attendance numbers. Thirty thousand. Thirty-five thousand. Forty thousand.

"We were wondering how many of those people would actually show up," Stoops said.

Turns out, nearly 51,000 fans showed up for the spring game at Kentucky — yeah, *Kentucky*.

That's more than watched Texas A&M and rock star Johnny Manziel at the end of their spring, and, oh, something like 46,000 more than attended the Wildcats' scrimmage a year earlier.

"I was blown away," Stoops said.

"We had our Cat Walk where we walk from our facility to our stadium, and thousands and thousands of people were there to greet our team. I have been a little bit amazed."

Welcome to the SEC.

College football is all about the head coach, and the SEC has the best (and highest-compensated) collection of gridiron brainiacs in the nation. Thing is, the whole group just got a lot more interesting — and, we'll go ahead and say it, *smarter* — with a four-man rookie class that includes Stoops, perhaps the unlikeliest of the quartet to stir such passion.

Auburn is thrilled to bring back Gus Malzahn, a known commodity on the Plains. He was the offensive coordinator for the Tigers when they won their 2010 national championship, and his hurry-up, no-huddle attack is just the thing to re-ignite the fire.

"I knew exactly what he was going to do," said senior defensive end Dee Ford. "I was thinking, 'Here comes the pace. Here comes the pace.' I really didn't expect him to come back this soon, but I am glad he did."

Tennessee, after fooling around with Lane Kiffin and Derek Dooley for a combined four years, lured Butch Jones, who had the resume to suggest he was ready to jump into the deep end — 50-27 overall at Central Michigan and Cincinnati.

And Arkansas, after a year of purgatory with interim coach John L. Smith, snapped up Wisconsin's Bret Bielema to clean up the mess left by the Bobby Petrino scandal. Bielema took the Badgers to the past three Rose Bowls, making this the major big-boy job switch of the offseason and reinforcing the point about who is on top of college football's food chain.

Stoops, taking on his first head coaching assignment, is this group's little brother.

Yeah, well, that's nothing new.

It's a truth of modern college football that the vast majority of assistant coaches move up to the big headsets via the offensive side of the ball. Defense might win championships, offense sells. But things are different when your name is Stoops and you're part of one of the foremost coaching families. They know defense.

Little brother Mark has, of course, gleaned wisdom from Bob, the national-championship winning head coach at Oklahoma, and he worked for brother Mike at Arizona as defensive coordinator for six years.

"I think what I've taken from Bob is that he's very optimistic and he has a great way about him with the way he leads his teams with great confidence," Mark Stoops said. "Mike, I just love his relentless determination to do things right with the Xs and Os."

Mark might be the most engaging of his college-coaching brothers, and he used those people skills to hastily put together what some called the best recruiting class in Kentucky history, ranked 29th nationally by *Rivals.com*.

Not a bad start for the scrappy newbie at a basketball school.

"It was much more than a sales pitch," Stoops said of his recruiting success. "It was showing them your vision."

Stoops, who rebuilt the Florida State defense as coordinator for the past three years, turns 46 before the season, so he's had time to hone that vision. He'll play a Stoops-brand defense (fundamentally sound, but not blitz-crazy), and he hit another public relations home run when he handed the offense to coordinator Neal Brown, who will resurrect the pass-happy "Air Raid" days in Lexington.

"Mark Stoops is a very good coach, and he's assembled a very good staff," a rival coach told *Lindy's*. "The mix of a Bobby Stoops-style defense with a Hal Mumme-style offense, that gives them a uniqueness to recruit to, but recruiting takes time. I think (the Kentucky job) is a good job, but they've got to allow coaches to create momentum. It's not a quick-fix deal."

No. It's not. Stoops is taking over a 2-10 team with little track record of SEC success.

But, for now, it's a new day. Oh, wait, that's Auburn's slogan.

Those very words — "It's a New Day" — are plastered on billboards in Alabama featuring Malzahn's picture. While that is as much truth as a sigh of relief for a program wrecked on the rocks, on and off the field, it's also an apt phrase for the league's new blood.

Malzahn can, and has, won with his style of tempo offense. Jones vows to play "fast and furious." Stoops wants to fling it. Everyone saw what Texas A&M did in its first season in the league. This is the SEC?

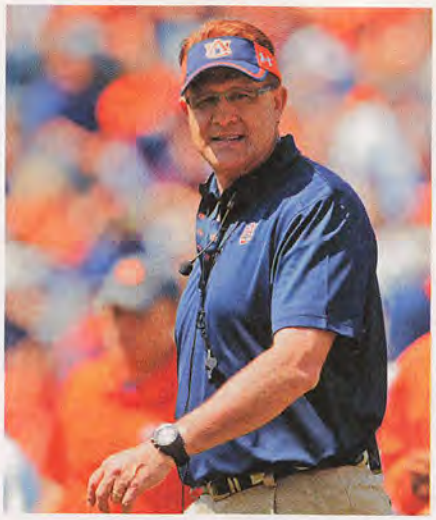
Well, it is as long as Nick Saban says it is, but even he has to be on guard against the encroaching offensive challenges to his steely defense.

Only Bielema, among the newcomers, has what would be considered a more traditional, balanced offensive approach, honed sharply at Wisconsin.

Collectively, though, the new coaches are about change. From 2008 to 2012, the SEC was the slowest-playing conference in the country, averaging 2.23 plays per minute of possession, according to *footballstudyhall.com*. The Big 12 was the fastest, at 2.47.

Now, the SEC has one of the Big 12's fastest-playing teams and it just hired at least three new coaches dedicated to pace.

Yep, it's not easy to do, but these new guys just made the league even more interesting.



CLOCKWISE:
Auburn head coach Gus Malzahn
Photo by AP Photo/Dave Martin

Arkansas head coach Bret Bielema
Photo by AP Photo/ Gareth Patterson

Tennessee head coach Butch Jones
Photo by AP Photo/ The Knoxville News Sentinel, Amy Smotherman Burgess

RANKING THE SEC COACHES

We know where to start. And Stoops, by virtue of being the only one on this list who has never been a head coach, has to work his way up from the bottom. That's fair. In between, there is ample debate.

1. **Nick Saban, Alabama** — The sun rises in the east, the Pope is Catholic.
2. **Steve Spurrier, South Carolina** — 22 of career 208 wins have come in past two seasons.
3. **Mark Richt, Georgia** — Turns out, 2010 was merely an outlier amid run of great success.
4. **Les Miles, LSU** — Crazy Les has his national championship ring, so go ahead, call him crazy.
5. **Bret Bielema, Arkansas** — Even SEC has to be impressed with three Rose Bowl rings.
6. **James Franklin, Vanderbilt** — How many failed before Franklin? About all of them, for decades.
7. **Kevin Sumlin, Texas A&M** — Building the Aggies to last beyond the Manziel thrill ride.
8. **Will Muschamp, Florida** — Bulk of his story yet to be written ... but it's becoming a page-turner.
9. **Dan Mullen, Mississippi State** — Very good. Not transcendent. But very good.
10. **Gary Pinkel, Missouri** — He'll adjust to SEC, but do Tigers have a naturally low ceiling?
11. **Hugh Freeze, Mississippi** — Love what he's doing, but has to pass the test of time.
12. **Butch Jones, Tennessee** — Young, energetic coach who is already a proven winner.
13. **Gus Malzahn, Auburn** — He and Freeze making Arkansas State a coaching launching pad.
14. **Mark Stoops, Kentucky** — Sept. 14 starts reality check: Louisville, Florida, at South Carolina and Alabama in succession.

HE'S NO MALL COP

HEISMAN CANDIDATE MCCARRON CAN DO A LOT MORE THAN MANAGE A GAME

BY DENNIS DODD | Photo by RD Moore

Can we once and for all get rid of the "game manager" label for AJ McCarron?

The term typically refers to a limited quarterback with limited skills in a limited offense. The Don't-Screw-It-Up Guy. You see them all over these days in the NFL, but the argument can be made that the term and all it implies took root at Alabama under Nick Saban.

The "system quarterback" perfected ... if not invented.

John Parker Wilson.

Greg McElroy.

McCarron.

Two of them led teams to national championships. One of them, McCarron, has done it twice. Wilson owned the school's single-season record for touchdowns (18), until he was surpassed by McElroy (20), who was then surpassed last season by McCarron (30).

Thirty touchdowns. Against three interceptions. While you were watching Alabama hammer away with its defense and running backs, Saban may have just developed himself a Heisman Trophy winner, and the next NFL quarterback to come out of Tuscaloosa.

"Playing here kind of gets us you in a state of mind about what the league is going to be like," McCarron said. "If you're not doing your job right, you can easily be replaced by somebody who is just as good or better."

There haven't been any quarterback issues for a while at Alabama. McCarron, a fifth-year senior, had to wait until early in the 2011 season to get the job. Even when he did, it almost seemed like the game plan was

to maneuver around him, rather than attack with him. Just let him manage the game while the defense and running game wins it.

Game manager?

If this were the corporate world, that kind of label would be the equivalent of getting that promotion without the raise. Translated to the club scene, the job title wouldn't impress the ladies — ranking somewhere between mall security guard and executive assistant.

"To me, you *can't* be a good quarterback unless you are a good game manager," Saban said last season. "I don't think it's fair to AJ, because I've said he's a really good game manager for us. ... He does everything. I don't think you can be a good quarterback *unless* you are a really good game manager. That's the ultimate compliment to me."

For a while there, McCarron seemed to be the latest in the line of these mall cops of football. But as he has continued to increase his numbers, his consistency has been mind-numbing. That, it should be noted, is a compliment. McCarron finished 2012 as the No. 1 rated passer in the country. He went 291 consecutive passes without throwing an interception.

"I believe I can make any throw," McCarron said. "I love it when coach allows me to throw more than what we usually do."

There are hints that is about to happen. Saban and then-offensive coordinator Jim McElwain put the offensive game plan on their quarterback in the BCS title game at the end of the 2011 season. McCarron surprised LSU by throwing eight times on first down, completing three for 95 yards in that 21-0 win.

"I knew about 30 days before the game when we were putting the game plan in," McCarron said. "Coach sat me down and said, 'Listen, a lot of the game plan is on you.'"

McCarron has been that attacker ever since.

"AJ had a great arm but didn't quite understand the importance of taking care of the ball and studying the game plan," said McElwain, who after the 2011 season became head coach at Colorado State. "(In that LSU game) he knew it inside and out. I still haven't seen the game, (but) it looked like everything was in slow motion for him."

The process of changing a slinger into something more productive was the hardest task. McElroy's arm strength was shaped into the game plan. McElwain and his replacement as Alabama offensive coordinator, Doug Nussmeier, were able to use the whole field with McCarron's throws.

"There wasn't a deep ball he (didn't like)," McElwain said. "It was like a shooter in basketball. He never met a shot he didn't like. I can't tell you how much he grew up."

A significant Heisman chase seemingly looms ahead. As a fifth-year senior, McCarron's semester is academically populated only with classes on Tuesday and Thursday, 75 minutes each at 11 a.m.

Strolling across campus he could be a ripe target for Bama's infamous cloying fans. But his mother — DeeDee Bonner, the one who gave him the AJ nickname without periods — reminded him, "When you get to my age people probably won't want your autograph and you'll miss it."

"I know," McCarron said of the fame, "it's not always promised."

A young set of receivers that he helped cultivate in 2012 are now an obvious strength in 2013. Sensing their youth, McCarron switched from the tradition of taking his offensive line out to eat each week to treating his wideouts last season.

"Outback is probably one of our favorite places," he said. "We'd get loaded cheese fries.

"My first year I took my O-line out because I needed to bond with them. I knew a lot of my receivers were younger, so I had to spend time with them. We had to let our relationship grow throughout the year."

The strategy paid off with that career year — 30 touchdowns, almost 3,000 yards, 291 passes between picks. Freshman Amari Cooper emerged as a 1,000-yard receiver on a team known for its pounding running game. The bonding with his wideouts couldn't have hurt when they needed each other most ... and with 3:15 left in the SEC Championship Game, McCarron found Cooper for the game-winning 45-yard touchdown.

McCarron, though, prefers to focus on the second play of the BCS title game against Notre Dame: A nice play-action pass to Kevin Norwood, a 29-yard connection on a corner route that put Bama at midfield.

"Everybody came back to the huddle and said, 'All right, it's on,'" McCarron said.

It was, indeed, on. Alabama won by four touchdowns. Cheese fries for everyone.

Former center Barrett Jones was reluctant to go into detail, but it's the things we don't see that make the senior quarterback from Mobile, Ala., so effective. McCarron has free rein to change plays at the line. Run-to-run, pass-to-run, run-to-pass.

"We do that (change plays) quite a bit," said Jones, who made the line calls. "AJ and I were constantly talking."

Talking was one way to put it when Jones was shown shoving McCarron during the BCS title game laugher against Notre Dame. As the offense came to the line, Jones saw something and wanted to change the line call. McCarron said he cancelled the change because the play clock was ticking down and was forced to call time out.

"When it gets to seven seconds, we have to stop because I don't have enough time to start my cadence," McCarron said. "Notre Dame changed with, like, five seconds left on the clock."

In frustration, the stomping McCarron screamed in Jones' face. In frustration, Jones shoved the team's starting quarterback.

At the line of scrimmage. In the national championship game. In front of millions.

What those millions probably didn't know was that Jones was the team's No. 1 leader, the best offensive lineman on the nation's best offensive line, and perhaps most importantly, these guys are roommates.

Jones is now gone to the NFL so the story's reconstruction has been managed well by that former game manager.

"If you ask anybody," McCarron said, "we get away with worse on the practice field. When you have two people like that, you're going to clash at certain points. We always hug and make up."

Career Stats

Year	Com.	Att.	Yds	TDs	INTs
2012	211	314	2,933	30	3
2011	219	328	2,634	16	5
2010	30	48	389	3	0
Total	460	690	5,956	49	8

Alabama's AJ McCarron is more than a game manager.

Photo by RD Moore

ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

For more coverage of the Crimson Tide, visit alabama.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Doug Nussmeier **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kirby Smart** **STADIUM: Bryant-Denny: 101,821**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
13-1 overall, 7-1 SEC (1st, West)

COACH:
Nick Saban — At Alabama: 68-13, 6 years; overall: 159-55-1, 17 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
14; 5 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB AJ McCarron, RB T.J. Yeldon, WR Amari Cooper, LT Cyrus Kouandjio, DE Ed Stinson, LB C.J. Mosley, LB Adrian Hubbard, S HaHa Clinton-Dix

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Alabama is loaded with experience and depth at the skill positions; McCarron returns as a third-year starter. Yeldon leads a deep backfield and Cooper serves as the No. 1 target in one of the deepest wide receiving corps in Crimson Tide history. Alabama has star power — Mosley and Hubbard — and plenty of experience at the linebacker position and proven playmakers — Clinton-Dix and CB Deion Belue — in the secondary.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The offensive line will feature three new starters, including a new center. On defense, the Crimson Tide will be replacing three regulars on the defensive line and will be counting on multiple new faces who did not see the field at all in 2012. For a second straight year, the secondary will be young and potentially thin on depth. With Jeremy Shelley gone, Alabama's kicking game is once again a question mark.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Eddie Lacy, C Barrett Jones, LG Chance Warmack, RT D.J. Fluker, NG Jesse Williams, CB Dee Milliner

OVERVIEW:
As the first back-to-back national champions of the BCS era, Alabama has already entered uncharted waters. Though a program hasn't won three consecutive titles since the 1930s, the Crimson Tide will enter the year as heavy favorites to do just that because of its surplus of playmakers on offense and its reputation for continually churning out defensive stars.

Even Better? Perhaps Not. But Still Probably the Best

As he's grown and matured as one of the greatest quarterbacks in Alabama history, AJ McCarron has seen his knowledge of the game, particularly its history, expand at the same rate as his passing efficiency.

The senior understands the uncharted waters his team will navigate throughout 2013. He experienced a similar version of it last season, when the Crimson Tide became the first team of the BCS era to win consecutive national titles.

Alabama is in prime position to win its third consecutive title and fourth in five years — an unprecedented run of success during an era in which the SEC has never been better.

"Everybody has a time and an era in college football. USC went through it; Florida went through it. Miami went through it for all those years," McCarron said.

"Our biggest thing to me is, why does your time and era have to end? That was the biggest key that I was trying to tell those guys, that it doesn't have to end if we stay team-oriented, not individual success. We don't want our names to be, 'What happened to the 2013 team,' as in 'Why did they fall off?'

"We don't want to be in that conversation."

Reputation, alone, puts Alabama in the conversation on an annual basis, but there are many reasons the Crimson Tide has a legitimate shot at winning it all yet again.

Under Nick Saban, the program has (mostly) always regrouped from a successful season and attacked the following year with similar results. Only in the 2010 season, when the Crimson Tide was loaded with talent but ultimately dropped three SEC games, has there been a setback since Alabama went undefeated during the 2008 regular season.

There's a method to the madness, of course, and it starts with early preparation. As in, just a couple of days after confetti rained down on their heads following a 42-14 rout of Notre Dame in Miami, the celebration was over.

Less than 12 hours after the victory, Saban, speaking at his next-day press conference, was already talking about the challenges that lay ahead in 2013. By spring, it was clear the players had heard it a few times.

"This team coming up hasn't done anything," junior safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix said. "That was last year's team. Now we have to find ourselves and define ourselves and compete in 2013."

OFFENSE

Third-year starters at quarterback aren't a common commodity in college football, particularly ones that are as efficient and talented as AJ McCarron, who passed on the NFL Draft to gun for his third national championship in a row.

His focus throughout the spring centered on expanding his leadership role. Now, he shows little hesitation to deliver a stern message to anyone and everyone. His arm strength has improved and he's added muscle. It will be a tall task to improve upon a season in which he led the nation in passing efficiency and threw for nearly 3,000 yards, 30 touchdowns and just three interceptions, but McCarron certainly has the swagger of one of the nation's top signal-callers.

Never has an Alabama quarterback been more surrounded by talented players at the skill positions. Sophomore T.J. Yeldon, who split carries with Eddie Lacy but still amassed 1,108 yards and 12 touchdowns, leads a deep pool of running backs that includes five-star freshman Derrick Henry, who broke his fibula during the spring but should be

T.J. Yeldon
Photo by RD Moore

healthy for two-a-days.

McCarron has one of the SEC's top receivers in sophomore Amari Cooper, who shattered most of Julio Jones' freshman records when he hauled in 59 passes for 1,000 yards and 11 touchdowns. The support system around Cooper will ensure that defenses can't devote all of their resources toward stopping him.

Speedy redshirt freshman slot receiver Chris Black didn't play a snap last season because of an injured shoulder, but his promise is on the same level as Cooper's. Reliable veterans Kevin Norwood, Kenny Bell, DeAndrew White and Christion Jones give McCarron strength in numbers.

The line, so dominant last season, is the biggest question mark. Junior left tackle Cyrus Kouandjio, a potential first-round pick in 2014, and Anthony Steen, who did not surrender a single sack last year, return to a group that will feature three players who have never played a snap when the game was still in balance.

Sophomore center Ryan Kelly is probably the most battle-tested, as he worked with the first team throughout Alabama's BCS practices because of Barrett Jones' foot injury. Arie Kouandjio has battled back from multiple knee injuries to become the frontrunner at left guard, where he'd play next to his little brother. Junior Austin Shepherd fended off junior college transfer Leon Brown to leave spring as the favorite to replace standout D.J. Fluker at right tackle.

DEFENSE

The backbone of Alabama's title run will once again need to be replenished at select spots.

The defensive line will feature the most new faces, as three regulars — nose guard Jesse Williams and defensive ends Damion Square and Quinton Dial — need to be replaced.

Senior Ed Stinson has been described as the "old man" of the line. He was quietly one of the most productive players on the team, leading all defensive linemen with 8.5 tackles for loss in 2012. He's provided strong leadership to a player such as junior Jeoffrey Pagan, who appears to be a ready-made replacement for Square on the opposite end. Pagan, regularly disruptive as a reserve last season, has the potential to be more of a threat as a pass rusher.

Junior Brandon Ivory and/or sophomore Darren Lake will need to fill the void left by Williams. The wild cards are sophomore LaMichael Fanning and redshirt freshman Dalvin Tomlinson. Both significantly upgraded their bodies during the offseason and each has the potential to help improve Alabama's pass rush.

The experience on defense is centered at linebacker, where last year's team MVP,

AJ McCarron
Photo by RD Moore

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	AJ McCarron*	Sr.	Broke most of Alabama's program records as a junior.	Blake Sims, Jr.
RB	T.J. Yeldon	So.	Split carries with Eddie Lacy; gained more than 1,000 yards.	Kenyan Drake, So.
WR	Amari Cooper*	So.	Broke most of Julio Jones' freshman receiving records.	DeAndrew White, Jr.
WR	Kevin Norwood*	Sr.	Missed spring with toe injury, but at his best in big games.	Kenny Bell, Sr.
WR	Chris Black	Fr.	Sidelined for entire freshman season with shoulder injury.	Christion Jones, Jr.
TE	Brian Vogler	Jr.	Saw the field primarily as a blocker in 2012.	OJ Howard, Fr.
LT	Cyrus Kouandjio*	Jr.	Could be the next NFL-bound Tide O-lineman.	Brandon Greene, Fr.
LG	Arie Kouandjio	So.	Older brother of Cyrus, fully healthy after multiple knee surgeries.	Kellen Williams, Sr.
C	Ryan Kelly	So.	Named to SEC's All-Freshman team despite playing minimally.	Chad Lindsay, Jr.
RG	Anthony Steen*	Sr.	Did not allow a single sack last season.	Isaac Luatua, So.
RT	Austin Shepherd	Jr.	Saw action in 10 games last year as a reserve.	Leon Brown, Jr.
K	Cade Foster*	Sr.	Primarily handled long field goal attempts and kickoffs in '12.	Adam Griffith, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Ed Stinson*	Sr.	Led all defensive linemen with 8.5 TFLs in 2012.	LaMichael Fanning, So.
NG	Brandon Ivory	Jr.	Regularly rotated in with first-team defense last year.	Darren Lake, So.
DE	Jeoffrey Pagan	Jr.	As a sophomore, had 4 TFLs and 1.5 sacks in reserve role.	Dalvin Tomlinson, Fr.
LB	Adrian Hubbard*	Jr.	Led Crimson Tide with 11 TFLs and 7 sacks.	Ryan Anderson, Fr.
LB	C.J. Mosley*	Sr.	Bypassed shot at NFL after leading Alabama with 107 tackles.	Reuben Foster, Fr.
LB	Trey DePriest*	So.	Missed most of the second half of spring with broken foot.	Reggie Ragland, So.
LB	Xzavier Dickson*	Jr.	Recorded two sacks in SEC Championship Game.	Denzel Devall, So.
CB	Deion Belue*	Sr.	Started all 14 games as JC transfer in 2012.	Cyrus Jones, So.
CB	Geno Smith	So.	As a freshman, emerged as Tide's starting nickel back.	Bradley Sylve, So.
SS	Ha Ha Clinton-Dix*	Jr.	Led Crimson Tide with 5 INTs last season.	Vinnie Sunseri, Jr.
FS	Landon Collins	So.	Former 5-star prospect ready for new role.	Jarrick Williams, Jr.
P	Cody Mandell*	Sr.	Three-year starter coming off most consistent season.	Worth Gregory, So.

*Returning Starter

CRIMSON TIDE RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Jonathan Allen
If there was a weakness for Alabama in 2012, it was the lack of consistent pass rush. Allen can improve that right away with his explosiveness off the edge. Allen is the big, physical-type of player Nick Saban likes at outside linebacker and can make an impact in year one.

Reuben Foster
Foster dominated the Under Amour All-American game and is one of the most explosive players in the country. Alabama is deep at inside linebacker, but Foster, with his ability to rush the passer as well, has the talent to step in and play significant snaps as soon as he gets on campus.

OJ Howard
Alabama has had some great tight ends in recent years, but Howard can take the position to new heights in Tuscaloosa. He enrolled at Alabama in January, and his combination of speed, size, and overall athleticism will create mismatches with any and all defenses.

THE SLEEPER

Leon Brown
Brown has only played football for three years but was brought in by Alabama as a true left tackle prospect. He is massive at 6-6, 300 pounds and had offers from Ole Miss and Kansas.

Committments	25
Average Stars	3.84
★★★★★	4
★★★★☆	13
★★★☆☆	8
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	96
National Rank: 1	SEC: 1

2014 NEEDS: There are no glaring needs for the Crimson Tide in 2013, but there are a few positions that will have top priority. The staff will place an emphasis on bringing in a top safety prospect. After bringing in only one inside linebacker prospect in 2012, Alabama will look to sign a couple of prospects at the position. Offensively, Alabama is set at running back and quarterback, but a speedy slot receiver will be on the list of prospects to get.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jonathan Allen	DE	6-3	263	★★★★★	Ashburn, VA	Stone Bridge
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the nation's No. 2 weakside defensive end and No. 11 overall prospect by Rivals.com.						
Anthony Averett	ATH	6-0	170	★★★	Woodbury, NJ	Woodbury
Rushed for 1,278 yards and 15 touchdowns while passing for 836 yards and 14 touchdowns. Also had 70 tackles and five interceptions in 2012.						
Cooper Bateman	QB	6-3	215	★★★★	Salt Lake City, UT	Cottonwood Senior
Under Armour All-American and Rivals250 selection. Threw for over 2,000 yards and over 20 touchdowns in 2010 and 2011.						
Leon Brown	OL	6-6	300	★★★	Brooklyn, NY	ASA College
Has only played football for three years but was brought in by Alabama as a true left tackle prospect. Had offers from Ole Miss and Kansas.						
Jonathan Cook	DB	6-0	185	★★★	Spanish Fort, AL	Spanish Fort
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com. Totaled 65 tackles, six sacks, and four interceptions as a junior in 2011.						
Raheem Falkins	WR	6-4	195	★★★★	New Orleans, LA	G W Carver
Rated as a four-star prospect by Rivals.com and as the 12th-ranked prospect in Louisiana. Had 800 yards receiving and 14 touchdowns in 2011.						
Reuben Foster	LB	6-1	244	★★★★★	Auburn, AL	Auburn
Rated as the top player in Alabama by Rivals.com and the nation's top inside linebacker prospect. Defensive MVP of the Under Armour All-Star game.						
Robert Foster	WR	6-3	187	★★★★	Monaca, PA	Central Valley
Under Armour All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the fourth wide receiver and No. 46 overall prospect in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Derrick Henry	RB	6-3	243	★★★★	Yulee, FL	Yulee
Rivals100 selection and U.S. Army All-American. Rushed for 4,261 yards and 55 touchdowns as a senior in 2012. Enrolled at Alabama in January.						
Brandon Hill	OL	6-7	390	★★★	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy
Originally signed with Alabama in the class of 2012. Enrolled at Alabama in January. Originally from Collierville, Tennessee.						
Grant Hill	OL	6-6	301	★★★★	Huntsville, AL	Huntsville
Selected as an Under Armour All American and in the Rivals100. Rated as fifth offensive tackle in the country by Rivals.com.						
OJ Howard	TE	6-6	237	★★★★★	Autauga, AL	Autauga Academy
Rated as the nation's top tight end by Rivals.com. Enrolled at Alabama in January and selected as an Under Armour All-American.						
Eddie Jackson	WR	6-0	175	★★★	Lauderdale Lakes, FL	Boyd Anderson
Will likely play defensive back at Alabama. Huge senior season led to late offer by big schools, including Alabama.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Tyren Jones	RB	5-9	215	★★★★	Marietta, GA	Walton
Rivals100 selection and U.S. Army All-American. Rushed for over 2,700 yards as a junior in 2011. Ranked No. 8 player in Georiga.						
Walker Jones	LB	6-2	234	★★★	Cordova, TN	Evangelical Christian School
Started on both sides of the ball in high school. Rated as 11th-best player in Tennessee and the No. 22 inside linebacker in the country by Rivals.com.						
Alvin Kamara	RB	5-10	197	★★★★	Norcross, GA	Norcross
Under Armour All-American and Rivals100 selection. Led Norcross to state championship as a senior. Ranked No. 6 player in Georgia.						
Dee Liner	DE	6-3	281	★★★★	Muscle Shoals, AL	Muscle Shoals
Rivals100 selection and No. 71 overall prospect by Rivals.com. Third-ranked player in Alabama and nation's seventh-ranked defensive tackle.						
Cole Mazza	OL	6-1	240	★★★	Bakersfield, CA	Liberty
Rated as nation's No.11 best center by Rivals.com... Rated as 71st recruit in California. Could also be a long snapper at Alabama.						
Parker McLeod	QB	6-3	190	★★★	Marietta, GA	Walton
Selected to Georgia Rising Seniors game in junior season. Enrolled at Alabama in January. Two-year starter at Walton High School.						
Darius Paige	DT	6-4	314	★★★★	Foley, AL	Foley
Rivals250 selection and No. 10 ranked player in the state of Alabama. Also rated as 15th-best defensive tackle in the country.						
A-Shawn Robinson	DT	6-4	320	★★★★★	Fort Worth, TX	Arlington Heights
Rated as the No. 4 defensive tackle in the country by Rivals.com and a Rivals100 selection. Second-ranked player in the state of Texas.						
Maurice Smith	DB	6-0	180	★★★★	Sugar Land, TX	Dulles
Rivals250 selection... Rated as No. 12 cornerback in the country by Rivals.com. Had 63 tackles and three interceptions as a junior in 2011.						
ArDarius Stewart	ATH	6-1	190	★★★★	Fultondale, AL	Fultondale
Accounted for over 100 touchdowns in 2011 and 2012 as a quarterback. Rated as the No. 3 athlete in the country by Rivals.com.						
Altee Tenpenny	RB	6-0	212	★★★★	North Little Rock, AR	North Little Rock
Rated as the No. 53 overall prospect in the country by Rivals.com and the No. 8 running back in the nation. Was selected as U.S. Army All-American.						
Tim Williams	DE	6-3	235	★★★★	Baton Rouge, LA	Univ. Laboratory School
Rated as the No. 5 best weakside defensive end in the country by Rivals.com. Had 45 tackles for loss and 16 sacks as a junior in 2011. Known as a speed rusher off the edge, but the Crimson Tide likes him as a linebacker. Williams chose Alabama over Miami and Florida State.						

CRIMSON TIDE SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
19	Edward Aldag	QB	6-0	185	So.	Birmingham
7	Ryan Anderson	LB	6-2	255	Fr.	Daphne
94	Dakota Ball	DL	6-2	270	Fr.	Lindale, GA
87	Parker Barrineau	WR	6-0	183	So.	Northport
35	Tyler Bass	WR	5-10	175	Sr.	Birmingham
18	Cooper Bateman	QB	6-3	208	Fr.	Murray, UT
7	Kenny Bell	WR	6-1	180	Sr.	Rayville, LA
13	Deion Belue	DB	5-11	183	Sr.	Tuscambia
31	Jerrod Bierbower	DB	6-1	190	Jr.	Dublin, OH
5	Chris Black	WR	5-11	182	Fr.	Jacksonville, FL
72	Leon Brown	OL	6-6	313	Jr.	Riverdale, MD
6	Ha Ha Clinton-Dix	DB	6-1	208	Jr.	Orlando, FL
26	Landon Collins	DB	6-0	215	So.	Geismar, LA
9	Amari Cooper	WR	6-1	202	So.	Miami, FL
39	Paden Crowder	LB	6-4	200	So.	Vestavia Hills
14	Luke Del Rio	QB	6-2	203	Fr.	Highlands Ranch, CO
33	Trey DePriest	LB	6-2	245	So.	Springfield, OH
30	Denzel Devall	LB	6-2	250	So.	Bastrop, LA
55	Josh Dickerson	LB	6-1	244	Jr.	Evans, GA
47	Xzavier Dickson	LB	6-3	265	Jr.	Griffin, GA
17	Kenyan Drake	RB	6-1	201	So.	Powder Spring, GA
36	Dustin Ellison	WR	6-0	170	Jr.	Monroeville
12	Phillip Ely	QB	6-1	198	So.	Tampa, FL
85	Malcolm Faciane	TE	6-5	267	So.	Picayune, MS
80	Raheem Falkins	WR	6-4	203	Fr.	New Orleans, LA
44	LaMichael Fanning	DL	6-7	270	So.	Hamilton, GA
43	Cade Foster	PK	6-1	224	Sr.	Southlake, TX
45	Jalston Fowler	RB	6-1	250	Jr.	Mobile
41	Kurt Freitag	TE	6-4	235	Fr.	Buford, GA
10	John Fulton	DB	6-0	186	Sr.	Manning, SC
41	Daniel Geddes	DB	5-6	170	Jr.	Northport
58	Brandon Greene	OL	6-5	307	Fr.	Ellenwood, GA
45	Worth Gregory	P	6-3	200	So.	Fort Mill, SC
99	Adam Griffith	PK	5-10	187	Fr.	Calhoun, GA
74	Caleb Gulledge	OL	6-4	286	Fr.	Prattville
58	Alex Harrelson	SN	6-0	220	So.	Vestavia Hills
86	Truett Harris	TE	6-3	210	So.	Brentwood, TN
1	Dee Hart	RB	5-9	187	So.	Orlando, FL
3	Derrick Henry	RB	6-3	238	Fr.	Yulee, FL
73	Brandon Hill	OL	6-6	385	Fr.	Collierville, TN
88	OJ Howard	TE	6-6	237	Fr.	Prattville
42	Adrian Hubbard	LB	6-6	252	Jr.	Lawrenceville, GA
99	Brandon Ivory	DL	6-4	310	Jr.	Memphis, TN
90	Bernel Jones	DL	6-3	240	Jr.	Montgomery
22	Christion Jones	WR	5-11	185	Jr.	Adamsville
5	Cyrus Jones	WR	5-10	196	So.	Baltimore, MD
82	Harrison Jones	TE	6-4	241	Jr.	Germantown, TN
70	Ryan Kelly	OL	6-5	290	So.	West Chester, OH
85	Korren Kirven	DL	6-5	281	Fr.	Lynchburg, VA
77	Arie Kouandjio	OL	6-5	315	So.	Hyattsville, MD
71	Cyrus Kouandjio	OL	6-6	310	Jr.	Hyattsville, MD
95	Darren Lake	DL	6-3	324	So.	York
25	Dillon Lee	LB	6-4	242	So.	Buford, GA
78	Chad Lindsay	OL	6-2	302	Jr.	The Woodlands, TX
51	Wilson Love	DL	6-3	286	So.	Mountain Brook
68	Isaac Luatua	OL	6-2	313	So.	La Mirada, CA
29	Cody Mandell	P	6-4	213	Sr.	Lafayette, LA
10	AJ McCarron	QB	6-4	214	Sr.	Mobile
47	Corey McCarron	TE	6-2	238	So.	Mobile
15	Parker McLeod	QB	6-3	193	Fr.	Marietta, GA
19	Jai Miller	DB	6-3	213	Fr.	Valley Grande
60	Brandon Moore	OL	6-0	313	So.	Cincinnati, OH
11	Alec Morris	QB	6-3	230	Fr.	Allen, TX
12	Taylor Morton	DB	5-11	186	Jr.	Centreville
32	C.J. Mosley	LB	6-2	232	Sr.	Theodore
64	Michael Newsome	DL	6-2	250	Jr.	Cockeysville, MD
59	Harold Nicholson	OL	6-5	283	Jr.	Columbus, OH
83	Kevin Norwood	WR	6-2	195	Sr.	D'Iberville, MS
46	Michael Nysewander	TE	6-1	235	Jr.	Hoover
53	Anthony Orr	DL	6-4	282	Jr.	Madison
34	Tyler Owens	LB	6-0	220	Jr.	Columbiana
8	Jeoffrey Pagan	DL	6-4	290	Jr.	Asheville, NC
11	Tana Patrick	LB	6-3	238	Sr.	Bridgeport
27	Nick Perry	DB	6-1	212	Sr.	Prattville
18	Reggie Ragland	LB	6-2	259	So.	Madison
81	Ty Reed	WR/QB	6-1	190	Sr.	Rocky Hill, CT
32	Trey Roberts	RB	6-0	180	So.	Mobile
44	Matt Sandlin	QB	6-3	207	Jr.	Tuscaloosa
79	Austin Shepherd	OL	6-5	315	Jr.	Buford, GA
6	Blake Sims	QB	6-0	202	Jr.	Gainesville, GA
24	Geno Smith	DB	6-0	186	So.	Atlanta, GA
61	Anthony Steen	OL	6-3	309	Sr.	Clarksdale, MS
49	Ed Stinson	DL	6-4	292	Sr.	Homestead, FL
3	Vinnie Sunseri	DB	6-0	210	Jr.	Tuscaloosa
16	Bradley Sylve	DB	5-11	180	So.	Port Sulphur, LA
50	Alphonse Taylor	OL	6-5	335	Fr.	Mobile
50	MK Taylor	LS	5-10	229	Sr.	Oxford
43	Matt Tinney	LB	6-1	247	Sr.	Hoover
54	Dalvin Tomlinson	DL	6-2	287	Fr.	McDonaugh, GA
84	Brian Vogler	TE	6-7	260	Jr.	Columbus, GA
69	Paul Waldrop	OL	6-4	276	So.	Phenix City
23	Jabriel Washington	DB	5-11	185	So.	Jackson, TN
38	Jared Watson	WR	6-0	170	Sr.	Northport
33	Jeremy Watson	WR	6-1	184	Sr.	Northport
2	DeAndrew White	WR	6-0	190	Jr.	Houston, TX
20	Jarrick Williams	DB	6-1	210	Jr.	Mobile
63	Kellen Williams	OL	6-3	302	Sr.	Lawrenceville, GA
89	Kieran Williams	TE	6-4	236	Fr.	Lawrenceville, GA
97	Jay Woods	DL	6-2	275	So.	Frisco, TX
4	T.J. Yeldon	RB	6-2	218	So.	Daphne

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
AJ McCarron	14	175.3	211	314	3	67.2	2933	30	85	209.5
B. Sims	10	114.7	5	10	0	50.0	77	0	35	7.7

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
A. Cooper	14	59	1000	16.9	11	54	71.4
K. Norwood	13	29	461	15.9	4	47	35.5
C. Jones	14	27	368	13.6	4	34	26.3

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
E. Lacy	14	204	1360	38	1322	6.5	17	73	94.4
T.J. Yeldon	14	175	1131	23	1108	6.3	12	43	79.1
K. Drake	12	42	285	4	281	6.7	5	38	23.4

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: C.J. Mosley 107, T. Depriest 59, N. Johnson 55
Tackles for loss: A. Hubbard 11, E. Stinson 8.5, C.J. Mosley 8
Sacks: A. Hubbard 7, C.J. Mosley 4, two tied with 3.5
Interceptions: H. Clinton-Dix 5, R. Lester 4, four tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

No one had a busier spring at Alabama than **Christion Jones**, who split time at wide receiver and cornerback. He very well could do the same during the 2013 season because he's proved capable at both positions.

Jones played both ways at Minor High School in Birmingham, so it wouldn't be anything new to him. His teammates raved at how quickly he picked up **Nick Saban's** notoriously complex defense.

"Even if I don't become a DB guy, it will help me as a receiver to know what to look for and how defenses are attacking our offense, so I have an understanding on that," Jones said.

"It's going to be a plus regardless of whether I go to DB or stay at receiver. We haven't figured that out."

• If Alabama wins its fourth BCS National Championship in five years, it might need to get creative with its inevitable trip to see President Barack Obama at the White House.

On its first trip after the 2009 national championship, Alabama visited the Capitol, Pentagon and the National Mall. Following the 2011 title, it checked out the Changing of the Guard at Arlington National Cemetery. This year, it was a trip to the Smithsonian Institution.

"We've seen just about everything there is to see," Saban said. "It's a great experience and I think the players really enjoy it."

Obama joked that he thought about setting up cots at the White House for Alabama's players because they've become such regular visitors.

"I feel like I definitely know my way around, especially know him pretty well, and then he gave me the shout-out, which was pretty awesome," quarterback **AJ McCarron** said. "There aren't many times the President of the United States gives you a shout-out."

• Fifth-year senior linebacker **Tana Patrick** made the most of his final spring at Alabama.

Patrick worked regularly with the first team, as starting middle linebackers **C.J. Mosley** and **Trey DePriest** recovered from injuries. Patrick led Alabama with six tackles in its first scrimmage, showed an enhanced knowledge of the playbook and embraced a bigger leadership role.

"It has been a very good experience. I've been embracing all of it," Patrick said. "Whatever they ask me to do, I'm willing to do."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On sophomore receiver Amari Cooper:** "Amari Cooper is unbelievable. He's better than (Tennessee's) Justin Hunter and Da'Rick Rogers. It's not even close. The guy's unbelievable. He might get 1,500 yards this season. ... He's like Jerry Rice. You can't cover him."

• **On 2013 projections:** "I thought they were lucky to win it last year. I thought the SEC was down a little bit as a whole. I didn't think they were a great team compared to other teams in the past. I think they benefited from the fact there were no great quarterbacks in the league last year, except at Texas A&M, and A&M beat them. ... I'd be surprised if they won it all again."

• **On the Tide's offense:** "Offensively, they're the most talented team in the league, no question. They've got guys that didn't dress (last year) that are better than half the people in the league are playing with."

C.J. Mosley
Photo by RD Moore

C.J. Mosley, and juniors Trey DePriest and Adrian Hubbard will look to build upon standout performances in 2012.

Mosley, who underwent offseason shoulder surgery, passed on potentially landing in the NFL Draft's first round and focused on becoming an every-down linebacker. Though he was all over the field on his way to a team-best 107 tackles, Mosley didn't see many snaps when Alabama played out of its base defense.

DePriest, who broke his foot during the spring but should be ready for fall camp, will man the middle with Mosley after starting all but once last season. Hubbard, who pondered leaving early for the NFL, is the Crimson Tide's most dynamic pass-rushing threat. He led the team with 11 tackles for loss and seven sacks and seemed to get better as the season progressed.

He'll be flanked on the other side by junior Xzavier Dickson, who spent time with the defensive line during the spring, and sophomore Denzel Devall, who made the most of the snaps he saw as a freshman.

For a second straight year, the Crimson Tide secondary could be the biggest uncertainty. Because Dee Milliner was on the opposite side of the field, Deion Belue was picked on frequently last season, but was ultimately good enough to start all 14 games. The former junior college transfer should be locked into that role as a senior.

Similar experience can be found in junior safeties Ha Ha Clinton-Dix, who led the Crimson Tide with five interceptions last season, and Vinnie Sunseri. How sophomore cornerback Geno Smith and sophomore safety Landon Collins embrace their expanded roles could ultimately determine whether Alabama once again leads the SEC in pass defense.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Redshirt freshman Adam Griffith and senior Cade Foster, who attempted long field goals and handled kickoffs last season, had good springs but Saban hadn't seen enough to make a final decision. The bar was set high last season by Jeremy Shelley, who didn't miss a single extra point or short field goal attempt.

Senior punter Cody Mandell was a source of frustration as a sophomore,

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB AJ McCarron

By returning for a fifth season, third as starter, McCarron has solidified himself as one of team's top leaders. ... Led nation in pass efficiency (175.23), completing 67 percent of his passes for 2,933 yards and 30 touchdowns. ... Didn't throw an interception until 10th game of 2012. ... Went 291 passes between interceptions, good for the second-longest streak in SEC history. ... Threw for 300 yards twice in 2012 and had four games in which he had four TD passes.

EMERGING STAR

WR Amari Cooper

The top threat in one of the deepest receiving corps Alabama has ever had. ... Named a 2012 Freshman All-American by multiple outlets, including the FWAA. ... Shattered Julio Jones' program freshman records by catching 59 passes for 1,000 yards and 11 touchdowns. ... Started season as a reserve but moved into starting role after DeAndrew White's season-ending injury. ... All five of his 100-yard receiving games came in second half of season or during postseason. ... Added seven pounds to frame and says he's faster.

TOP NEWCOMER

TE OJ Howard

Five-star prospect from Prattville, Ala., joined team in January as early enrollee. ... Plays a position of need that lost both starters from 2012. ... Idolizes NFL tight ends Tony Gonzalez and Vernon Davis. ... Specific position was not determined during spring, but says he hopes to play both TE and H-back. ... Listed at 6-6, 237 pounds in spring but is expected to get even bigger. ... Rooms with fellow five-star, RB Derrick Henry. ... Missed four weeks of senior season at Autauga Academy with a knee injury.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	35.7	18
Rushing	182.9	29
Passing	261.2	27
Total	444.1	22
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	13.5	3
Rushing	110.2	10
Passing	176.2	13
Total	286.4	5
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 12	+ 0.92	11

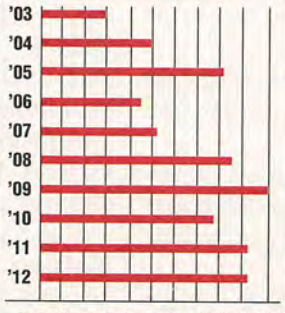
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	34.9	20
Rushing	214.5	16
Passing	215.2	69
Total	429.6	31
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	8.2	1
Rushing	72.2	1
Passing	111.5	1
Total	183.6	1
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 8	+ 0.62	23

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	38.7	12
Rushing	227.5	16
Passing	218.0	75
Total	445.5	31
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	10.9	1
Rushing	76.4	1
Pass	173.6	7
Total	250.0	1
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 14	+ 1.00	13

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

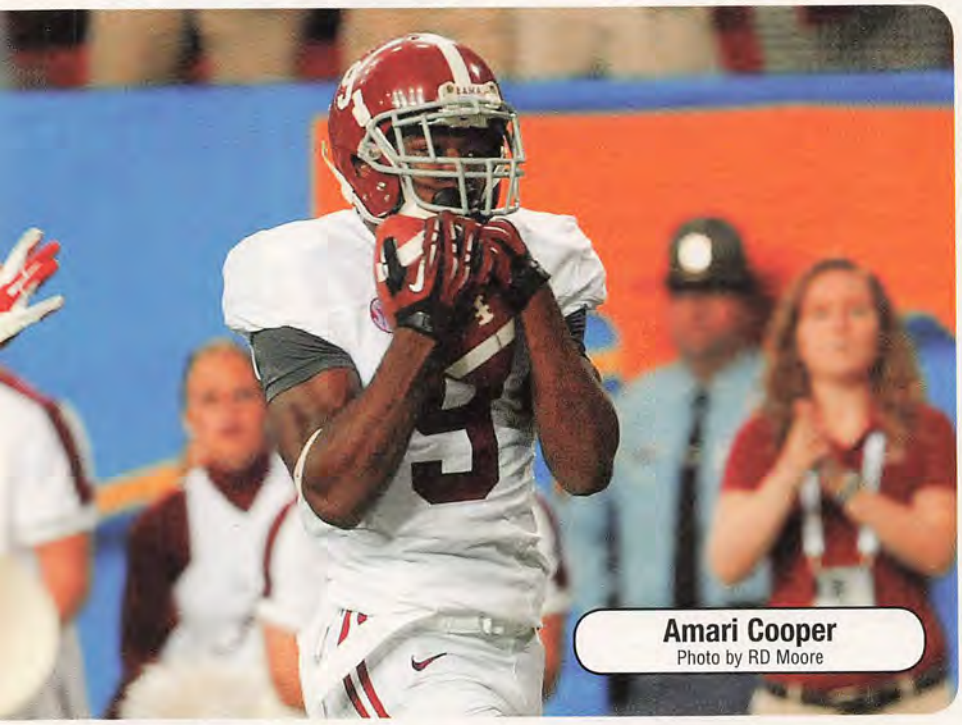


RESULTS

13-1, 8-1

W	vs. Michigan (Arlington, TX)	41-14
W	WESTERN KENTUCKY	35-0
W	at Arkansas	52-0
W	FAU	40-7
W	OLE MISS	33-14
W	at Missouri	42-10
W	at Tennessee	44-13
W	MISSISSIPPI STATE	38-7
W	at LSU	21-17
L	TEXAS A&M	24-29
W	WESTERN CAROLINA	49-0
W	AUBURN	49-0
SEC Championship Game		
W	Georgia	32-28
BCS National Championship Game		
W	Notre Dame	42-14

PLAYER PROFILE



Amari Cooper
Photo by RD Moore

Despite Big Delivery, Many Goals Remain

Amari Cooper expected more out of himself as a freshman.

The standout wide receiver from Miami enrolled early and arrived in Tuscaloosa with a purpose. Though he didn't catch a pass in Alabama's spring game, didn't practice much in August because of an injured toe and played for a team that has historically maintained a ground-oriented offense, Cooper had his eyes set on 1,200 receiving yards.

It never happened, but it's hard to find anyone who would call it a failure.

Cooper was probably the only person disappointed with his standout campaign, which ended with 59 receptions, 1,000 yards and 11 touchdowns. As the centerpiece of Alabama's promising receiving corps, he has his eyes set on a bigger sophomore season.

"You don't want to get a big head after just one big season," Cooper said. "I have two more years here. At least."

He has bigger plans, bigger goals. It's why he graduated from Northwestern High School early and immediately invested in his new challenge at Alabama.

"He's got a very high football IQ. Football's really important to him," former Alabama wide receivers coach Mike Groh said. "Once he got there, he spent a lot of extra time on his own, watching tape, coming in and sitting with me, asking questions, so he could understand and know the playbook as quickly as possible."

Cooper didn't exactly get on the field as soon as possible. Pegged behind DeAndrew White at the X receiver position, Cooper's snaps were limited through the first month of the season. His only catch in the season-opening romp ended with a jammed finger.

But when White went down with a season-ending knee injury, Cooper rose to the occasion. He caught eight passes, including two for touchdowns, in the same game in which White tore his ACL. Over the second half of the season, he had five 100-plus-yard games and multiple highlight-reel catches.

His 45-yard touchdown catch in the fourth quarter of last year's SEC Championship Game served as the game-winner. He caught two touchdown passes in the BCS national title game, the last of which ensured he would finish his freshman season with 1,000 yards.

He shattered most of the Alabama freshman records set by Julio Jones, but Cooper prefers the comparisons to stop right there.

"Obviously, Julio was a great player and is a great player, but I'm not Julio," Cooper said. "At the end of the day, we're two different people. We're not the same. I'll never be Julio. That's that."

but was consistent last year as a junior. Though he doesn't have the strongest leg in the SEC, he rarely had any shanks and dropped 19 of his 50 punts inside the 20.

Christion Jones, Cyrus Jones and Dee Hart are back as options as returners. Though Christion Jones returned a kickoff for a touchdown and was the Crimson Tide's overall leader in 2012, his standing could ultimately be affected by his workload at wide receiver or cornerback. Hart, who tore his ACL for the second time in two years last season, was "probably the most effective" at returning punts, Saban said.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The litmus test comes early for Alabama, as it travels to Texas A&M after an early bye week for its second game of the year. Led by Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel, the Aggies stunned the Crimson Tide, 29-24, for their only loss of the year, and they appear to be the toughest team standing in Alabama's way of returning to the SEC Championship.

The rest of the slate shakes out favorably, as the Crimson Tide avoids SEC East powers Florida, Georgia and South Carolina for a second straight year and adds a rebuilding Kentucky team.

Both of Alabama's arch rivals, Tennessee and Auburn, are coming off down years, too. Alabama not only hosts LSU on Nov. 9 at Bryant-Denny Stadium, but it faces the Tigers after the second of its two byes.

— Andrew Gribble

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	vs. Virginia Tech (Atlanta)	7-6
Sept. 14	at Texas A&M	11-2
Sept. 21	COLORADO STATE	4-8
Sept. 28	OLE MISS	7-6
Oct. 5	GEORGIA STATE	1-10
Oct. 12	at Kentucky	2-10
Oct. 19	ARKANSAS	4-8
Oct. 26	TENNESSEE	5-7
Nov. 9	LSU	10-3
Nov. 16	at Mississippi State	8-5
Nov. 23	CHATTANOOGA	6-5
Nov. 30	at Auburn	3-9

• AUBURN • TEXAS A&M • ALABAMA • ARKANSAS • LSU • OLE MISS •

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ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

For more coverage of the Razorbacks, visit arkansas.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jim Chaney **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chris Ash** **STADIUM: Reynolds Razorback Stadium: 72,000**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
4-8 overall, 2-6 SEC (6th, West)

COACH:
Bret Bielema — At Arkansas: 1st year; overall: 68-24, 7 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
13; 4 offense, 8 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
C Travis Swanson, FB Kiero Small, DE Chris Smith, DT Byran Jones, PK Zach Hocker

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Swanson, who earned second-team All-SEC honors last season, is the best returning center in the league. The defensive line is experienced and is truly two-deep. Hocker is a proven placekicker and could punt, too. The hiring of Bielema added enthusiasm around the program.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
They abound. Unproven quarterbacks, no proven go-to receivers and a young line on offense. Willing but small safeties on defense and linebacker positions as wide open closing spring ball as when it began. Special teams have no proven game-breakers.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Tyler Wilson, RB Knile Davis, RB-KR Dennis Johnson, WR Cobi Hamilton, OG Alvin Bailey, TE Chris Gragg, LB Alonzo Highsmith

OVERVIEW:
Two springs ago, even with Bobby Petrino still the coach, 2013 was projected to be an Arkansas rebuilding year after a great 2012. The crash came early during Petrino's absence in 2012, as the team went 4-8. Now, Bielema arrives rebuilding from the ground up, and a little patience is warranted in the ever-tough SEC West.

Ferocious and Fun: Bielema A Reasonable Tough Guy

Certainly, Bret Bielema has never been called soft.

He established a reputation with his physical and successful Wisconsin teams, coaching the Badgers to a 68-24 record from 2006-2012. In a sound bite that best describes his tenure there, an opposing coach once said after playing Bielema's Badgers: "They took a little bit of our manhood from us today."

It is with that backdrop that Bielema lands in SEC country, but also carries a reputation as a "player's coach."

And after the rigid direction under Bobby Petrino from 2008 through 2011, these Razorbacks needed a new direction, one that created an environment they want to play in and one that will attract recruits to play with them.

Sure, the Razorbacks had success under Petrino — 10-3 and 11-2 records in 2010 and 2011 — but that all came crashing down after Petrino was caught in scandal and fired last spring. A 4-8 season ensued under interim coach John L. Smith.

The Razorbacks say they got their men with Bielema and the staff he hired.

"It's a very open-door policy and they preach it every week that they have been here," fifth-year senior starting center Travis Swanson said. "They say 'Come up here and just talk to us.' They want to get to know you on a personal level, which is good to see."

Spared by injury from spending his final year of eligibility in the Arkansas' forlorn 2012, fifth-year senior fullback Kiero Small relishes his last year as part of a new era.

"You know we're all happy that it's over," Small said of the 2012 nightmare. "We can put it behind us and go play football and with Coach B. we're having a good time, but we're also working hard."

Bielema and his staff have preached their offices are places they want their players to drop by and not dread.

"It has grown every week," Bielema said. "Just the culture to get those guys understanding that we want them."

The defense especially seems to feel wanted.

Petrino called his own offense and was primarily offensive.

Bielema, an old Iowa nose guard, played defense and then coached defense, but as head coach spends time with both units without specifically coordinating either.

"Now we have maybe not just a defensive coach," senior safety Eric Bennett said, "but a coach that cares about both sides of the ball and that's a good thing."

OFFENSE

Richard LaFargue, the All-Southwest Conference center on Frank Broyles' 1975 Southwest Conference champion Razorbacks, summed up an old lineman's perspective about Arkansas' offense changing from the Petrino era to the one Bielema brought from Wisconsin.

"I'm glad to hear we're going to line up and hit somebody in the mouth this year and not play fast break on grass," LaFargue said. "From an offensive lineman's standpoint, that's what we want."

Now, some old quarterbacks and receivers might argue that's not what they want, but Bielema was never so Neanderthal at Wisconsin to abandon the forward pass.

His teams threw it, too.

In fact, sophomore Brandon Allen's prowess throwing the deep ball had him leading the quarterback pack at spring drill's close, with fifth-year senior Brandon Mitchell, moved from quarterback to receiver last year but requesting a move back to quarterback with two-year

Chris Smith
Photo by Spruce Derden-US PRESSWIRE

starter Tyler Wilson graduated.

Austin Allen, Brandon's younger brother who quarterbacked Fayetteville High to the 2012 Arkansas state championship, joins the team, but his big brother is the choice for now.

"Brandon Allen played his best football the last two weeks of spring ball," Bielema said. "I think we feel good about that."

The balance for the balanced offense Bielema craves begins in the line which the staff realigned mid-spring.

Moving junior Brey Cook from right tackle to right guard and promoting rangy sophomore Grady Ollison to right tackle increased the heft inside and the athleticism outside, and moving former 2011 tackle and 2012 redshirt Mitch Smothers from backup center to starting left guard solidified a line anchored by senior Rimington Trophy candidate Travis Swanson and senior incumbent left tackle David Hurd.

"It was a major change and it was a good fit," Swanson said of the switches.

A five-star recruit, incoming freshman Hunter Henry, joins a collection of tight ends behind solid senior incumbent Austin Tate.

All of the proven big-time receivers of the Petrino era are gone, but a bunch with a lot to prove return, including seniors Javontee Herndon, Julian Horton, and Demetrius Wilson and sophomores Mekale McKay, Keon Hatcher and D'Arthur Cowan. McKay can make the big play, but Wilson and Herndon were the most consistent.

Bielema "loves" the toughness of senior blocking fullback/short yardage runner Kiero Small and also was impressed with big backs Kody Walker and walk-on Patrick Arinze.

Sophomore letterman tailback Jonathan Williams — 6-0, 220, and Arkansas' third-leading rusher in 2012 — best blends size and speed.

Sophomore Nate Holmes is fast, but weighs only 176. Incoming freshman tailback Alex Collins was rated a five-star recruit.

DEFENSE

Accompanying Bielema from Wisconsin, defensive coordinator Chris Ash arrived in Fayetteville in January vowing not to let anything seen or heard about the Razorbacks in 2012 affect his clean-slate personnel view for 2013.

Apparently, Ash and the defensive staff held true to the vow.

Jarrett Lake, Daunte Carr and Braylon Mitchell, the senior and two juniors finishing spring ball as the first-team linebackers, didn't have a start among them in 2012, nor did Austin Jones, the second-team linebacker that Bielema most praised after the spring game.

Mekale McKay
Photo by John Williamson

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Brandon Allen	So.	Last year's backup was the best this spring.	Brandon Mitchell, Sr.
RB	Jonathan Williams	So.	Has team's best combo of power and speed.	Nate Holmes, So.
FB	Kiero Small	Sr.	Senior hardship injury now looks like good fortune.	Patrick Arinze, Jr.
WR	Mekale McKay*	So.	Is able to create the most separation among WRs.	Julian Horton, Sr.
WR	Demetrius Wilson	Sr.	Was a spring standout, says Bielema.	Keon Hatcher, So.
WR	Javontee Herndon	Sr.	Had 21 catches last season; Hogs' most veteran WR.	D'Arthur Cowan, So.
TE	Austin Tate*	Sr.	Can block and catch.	Alex Voelzke, So.
LT	David Hurd*	Sr.	He's a solid senior starter.	Austin Beck, So.
LG	Mitch Smothers	So.	A 2011 starting OT, redshirted 2012.	Cordale Boyd, Fr.
C	Travis Swanson*	Sr.	Probably best center in college, says Bielema.	Luke Charpentier, Jr.
RG	Brey Cook	Jr.	Moved from tackle to guard.	Marcus Danenhauer, So.
RT	Grady Ollison	So.	Most athletic tackle.	Chris Stringer, Jr.
PK	Zach Hocker*	Sr.	Big leg kicking off or kicking field goals.	John Henson, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Chris Smith*	Sr.	Big-play man had 9.5 sacks, 13 TFL last season.	Deatrich Wise, Fr.
DT	Byran Jones*	Sr.	Has much to give and gives it all.	DeMarcus Hodge, So.
DT	Robert Thomas	Sr.	Vast potential has not been fully reached yet.	Darius Philon, Fr.
DE	Trey Flowers*	Jr.	He's a fine flank to a fine front four; 13 TFL in 2012.	Brandon Lewis, Fr.
LB	Braylon Mitchell	Jr.	Old dog up to new tricks with new staff.	Austin Jones, Sr.
LB	Daunte Carr	Jr.	Was a spring shocker at middle linebacker.	Robert Atiga, Sr.
LB	Jarrett Lake	Sr.	Another old dog impressing new staff.	Otha Peters, So.
CB	Tevin Mitchel*	Jr.	Team's best CB; limited to 8 games last year due to injury.	Carroll Washington, Jr.
CB	Jared Collins	Fr.	New staff likes redshirt freshman.	Will Hines, So.*
SS	Rohan Gaines*	So.	Little big man hits hard, was Freshman All-American.	Tiquention Coleman, Jr.
FS	Eric Bennett*	Sr.	Made 40 tackles last year; new staff sees better things.	Davyon McKinney, So.
P	Zach Hocker	Sr.	Hocker wants to do all the kicking, but watch for Irwin-Hill.	Sam Irwin-Hill, Jr.

*Returning Starter

RAZORBACKS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Hunter Henry

Henry was already committed to Arkansas, which needed a quality tight end in the class, but Alabama never quit recruiting him and Bielema's staff had to put in work to keep him. The nation's No. 4 tight end was recruited coast to coast and made 107 catches for 1,449 yards with 17 total touchdowns in 2012.

Alex Collins

Already a fan favorite, Collins brings game-breaking ability to a thin group of running backs and should pair nicely with 2012 four-star running back signee Jonathan Williams. The Hogs went into Florida and plucked him away from Miami, Florida and Florida State, despite difficulties getting a parent to sign his letter of intent.

Reeve Koehler

What Arkansas did in Florida recruiting was impressive, but the Hogs also reached all the way into Honolulu to land four-star guard Reeve Koehler. One of the strongest prospects in the country, this national recruit has the ability to play early and fits the mold of what Bret Bielema likes in his offensive linemen.

THE SLEEPER

Drew Morgan

Arkansas' Player of the Year led Greenwood to 38 wins in-a-row and three state championships. Last season, he had 1,887 yards from scrimmage with 33 touchdowns.

Greenwood coach Rick Jones said that Morgan may not be the best receiver, running back or defensive player in the state, but he is the best football player.

Committments	23
Average Stars	2.96
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	4
★★★☆☆	14
★★☆☆☆	5
Total Stars	68
National Rank: 27	SEC: 12

2014 NEEDS: Arkansas wants to bring in a quarterback in 2014 and Bret Bielema has said he would like to bring in one big-time running back in every class, but the biggest need for 2014 is at defensive tackle. Arkansas has signed only one high school defensive tackle in each of the last three years, and this year's starters are both seniors. Inside the state, there are two four-star defensive tackle recruits in Springdale Har-Ber's Josh Frazier and El Dorado's Bijhon Jackson, both of whom already have Razorback scholarship offers.

— by Trey Biddy/HawgSports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Austin Allen	QB	6-2	217	★★★	Fayetteville, AR	Fayetteville
Rivals.com's No. 3 ranked Arkansas prospect threw for 7,715 yards and 75 touchdowns, while winning back-to-back 7A state championships.						
Tevin Beanum	DE	6-4	235	★★★	Forrest City, AR	Forrest City
Lived in Germany before moving to Forrest City, where he only played football two years, but was ranked the state's No. 8 recruit.						
Alex Brignoni	DB	6-2	195	★★★	Fayetteville, AR	Fayetteville
Rivals.com's No. 5 prospect in Arkansas had 102 tackles and 5 interceptions in 11 games for the back-to-back state champions.						
Tiquention Coleman	DB	5-10	200	★★	Milledgeville, GA	Georgia Military College
Had 44 tackles with 4 interceptions, 2 pass breakups and 2 fumble recoveries as a sophomore.						
De-Andre Coley	DB	6-1	185	★★	Miami, FL	Northwestern
Coley registered 68 tackles, 6 sacks, an interception and 12 pass breakups as a senior.						
Alex Collins	RB	5-11	207	★★★★	Plantation, FL	South Plantation
Rivals.com ranked him the No. 13 running back prospect in the nation after he rushed for 1,400 yards and 14 touchdowns in only eight games as a senior.						
D.J. Dean	ATH	5-11	175	★★★	Newton, TX	Newton
Rivals.com ranked him the No. 62 athlete in the nation. He rushed for 1,014 yards and passed for 1,062 while amassing 31 touchdowns.						
Brooks Ellis	LB	6-2	215	★★★	Fayetteville, AR	Fayetteville
A member of a two-time state championship team, he racked up 114 tackles, 16 TFLs and 4 sacks and was ranked the No. 4 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com.						
Denzell Evans	RB	6-0	205	★★★	Bellaire, TX	Bellaire
Ran for 1,147 yards and 16 touchdowns as a senior and had 2,855 yards and 35 touchdowns in his career.						
Melvinson Hartfield	DB	5-11	183	★★	Dallas, TX	South Oak Cliff
Caught 12 passes for 324 yards (27.0 yards per catch) with 4 touchdowns as a senior.						
Hunter Henry	TE	6-6	235	★★★★	Little Rock, AR	Pulaski Academy
Rivals.com ranked him the No. 102 prospect in the nation and the No. 4 tight end after he picked up 1,449 receiving yards with 17 total touchdowns.						
Sam Irwin-Hill	K	6-3	210	★★	San Francisco, CA	City College of San Francisco
Originally from Australia, picked the Hogs over offers from Louisiana Tech, Miami and Utah State.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Denver Kirkland	OL	6-5	333	★★★★	Miami, FL	Booker T. Washington
Rivals.com's No. 166 recruit in the nation and No. 13 offensive tackle picked Arkansas over Florida State, Miami and many more.						
Reeve Koehler	OL	6-3	321	★★★★	Honolulu, HI	St. Louis
Rivals.com ranked him the No. 156 recruit in the nation, the No. 8 offensive guard and the No. 2 prospect in Hawaii.						
Ke-tyrus Marks	DT	6-2	285	★★	Riviera Beach, FL	Suncoast
Registered 60 tackles and a school-record 19 sacks as a senior and had 145 career tackles.						
Korliss Marshall	RB	6-0	185	★★★	Osceola, AR	Osceola
Rivals.com's No. 6 Arkansas prospect amassed 4,347 career rushing yards with 60 TDs, including 1,711 yards and 24 in 2012 — with a 13.3 yards per carry average.						
John McClure	OL	6-4	320	★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler County C.C.
Originally walked on at Kansas State before becoming one of the nation's top junior college guard prospects.						
Damon Mitchell	QB	6-2	205	★★★	Egg Harbor City, NJ	Cedar Creek
Passed for 1,025 yards and 22 TDs while rushing for 1,027 yards and 21 TDs as a senior. Rivals.com tabbed him as the No. 15 dual-threat QB in the nation.						
Drew Morgan	WR	6-0	180	★★★	Greenwood, AR	Greenwood
Rivals.com's No. 7 ranked Arkansas prospect had 83 catches for 1,122 yards and 14 TDs and rushed 82 times for 765 yards and 19 TDs.						
Dan Skipper	OL	6-10	295	★★★	Arvada, CO	Ralston Valley
Originally committed to Tennessee, Rivals.com's No. 4 ranked Colorado prospect chose the Hogs over offers from Michigan, Ole Miss, Ohio State and others.						
Martrell Spaight	LB	6-1	220	★★★	Coffeyville, KS	Coffeyville C.C.
Originally from North Little Rock (Ark.), Spaight racked up 130 tackles, 2 sacks and 14 TFLs last season.						
Myke Tavarres	LB	6-2	220	★★★	Weed, CA	College of the Siskiyous
He made 85 tackles, 3 sacks, 2 interceptions and 13 TFLs last season after registering 51 stops and 5 sacks as a freshman.						
Carroll Washington	DB	6-0	180	★★★	Salinas, CA	Hartnell C.C.
One of the nation's top JUCO cornerback recruits, he registered 53 tackles and 8 interceptions in two seasons at Hartnell.						

RAZORBACKS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
10	Brandon Allen	QB	6-3	214	So.	Fayetteville
33	Patrick Arinze	FB	5-10	254	Jr.	La Mesa, CA
95	Horace Arkadie	DE	6-4	278	So.	Irving, TX
44	Robert Atiga	LB	6-3	237	Sr.	West Valley City, UT
17	Dakota Baggett	CB	5-8	164	So.	Bentonville
37	Toby Baker	P	6-3	193	Fr.	Memphis, TN
68	Austin Beck	OT	6-7	296	So.	Nowata, OK
14	Eric Bennett	S	6-0	191	Sr.	Tulsa, OK
79	Ben Benton	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Memphis, TN
62	Devin Bowers	LB	6-1	230	So.	Fayetteville
72	Cordale Boyd	OL	6-3	311	Fr.	Memphis, TN
28	Ray Buchanan, Jr.	CB	5-11	187	Fr.	Suwanee, GA
16	Brian Buehner	QB	5-11	197	Jr.	Louisville, KY
26	Alex Cacciarelli	WR	6-0	187	Jr.	Brentwood, MO
24	Daunte Carr	LB	6-3	229	Jr.	Gainesville, GA
75	Luke Charpentier	C	6-4	312	Jr.	River Ridge, LA
7	Tiquention Coleman	S	5-10	198	Jr.	Mauldin, SC
29	Jared Collins	CB	6-0	169	Fr.	Tulsa, OK
74	Brey Cook	OT	6-7	318	Jr.	Springdale
6	D'Arthur Cowan	WR	6-3	187	So.	Olive Branch, MS
53	Alan D'Appollonio	SNP	6-0	221	Jr.	Phoenix, AZ
59	Marcus Danenhauer	OG	6-5	300	So.	Bentonville
66	Adam Deacon	OG	6-1	310	So.	Little Rock
85	Demetrius Dean	TE	6-3	270	So.	Fayetteville
11	A.J. Derby	QB	6-5	241	Jr	Iowa City, IA
55	Matt Emrich	SNP	6-3	186	Fr.	El Dorado
4	Kelvin Fisher, Jr.	CB	5-11	200	So.	Queen Creek, AZ
86	Trey Flowers	DE	6-4	256	Jr.	Huntsville, AL
26	Rohan Gaines	S	5-11	190	So.	Bainbridge, GA
58	Ray Gervasi	C	6-2	339	Jr.	Orinda, CA
32	Drew Gorton	SNP	6-0	196	So.	Fayetteville
61	Ryan Gray	OL	6-2	290	Fr.	Mahopac, NY
4	Keon Hatcher	WR	6-2	208	So.	Owasso, OK
5	Eric Hawkins	WR	6-0	183	Fr.	Longview, TX
43	John Henson	K	5-11	165	Jr.	Southlake, TX
19	Javontee Herndon	WR	6-1	194	Sr.	Jacksonville, FL
9	Will Hines	CB	6-1	191	So.	Waco, TX
18	Zach Hocker	K	6-0	182	Sr.	Russellville
93	DeMarcus Hodge	DT	6-1	340	So.	Monroe, LA
22	Nate Holmes	RB	6-1	176	So.	Port Arthur, TX
16	Price Holmes	S	6-3	213	Sr.	Batesville
2	Julian Horton	WR	6-1	202	Sr.	Norcross, GA
69	David Hurd	OT	6-6	309	Sr.	West Monroe, LA
94	Taiwan Johnson	DE	6-3	255	Fr.	Manvel, TX
52	Austin Jones	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Dallas, TX
54	Byran Jones	DT	6-2	310	Sr.	Junction City
97	Darrell Kelly-Thomas	DE	6-4	238	So.	Lufkin, TX
39	Jarrett Lake	LB	6-3	220	Sr.	Jenks, OK
30	Clinton Lee	FB	6-0	212	So.	Amarillo, TX
89	Brandon Lewis	DE	6-5	258	Fr.	Memphis, TN
35	Morgan Linton	FB	5-11	263	Jr.	Lonoke
89	Mitchell Loewen	TE	6-4	265	So.	Lahaina, HI
3	Defonta Lowe	S	6-3	190	So.	Bearden
92	John Matthews	DT	6-2	312	So.	Osceola
78	Johnathan McClure	OL	6-4	321	Jr.	Wichita, KS
18	Davis McElroy	QB	6-4	215	So.	Lee's Summit, MO
48	Adam McFain	K	6-0	174	Fr.	Greenwood
82	Mekale McKay	WR	6-6	195	So.	Louisville, KY
13	Davyon McKinney	CB	6-3	195	So.	Forrest City
15	Keante Minor	WR	6-0	225	Jr.	East St. Louis, IL
8	Tevin Mitchel	CB	6-0	181	Jr.	Mansfield, TX
17	Brandon Mitchell	QB	6-4	239	Sr.	Amite, LA
34	Braylon Mitchell	LB	6-3	229	Jr.	Heber Springs
38	Jerry Mitchell	S	6-1	219	Sr.	Mandeville, LA
63	R.J. Morris	OL	6-4	305	Fr.	Naperville, IL
50	Grady Ollison	OT	6-5	274	So.	Malvern
5	Otha Peters	LB	6-2	232	So.	Covington, LA
91	Darius Philon	DT	6-3	284	Fr.	Mobile, AL
13	Taylor Reed	QB	6-3	210	So.	El Dorado
42	Devin Ryan	FB	5-10	217	Fr.	Flower Mound, TX
29	Chris Saunders	WR	5-11	188	Fr.	Dallas, TX
36	Kiero Small	FB	5-10	246	Sr.	Baltimore, MD
42	Chris Smith	DE	6-3	266	Sr.	Mount Ulla, NC
65	Mitch Smothers	OG	6-4	313	So.	Springdale
83	Jeremy Sprinkle	TE	6-6	231	Fr.	White Hall
70	Chris Stringer	OT	6-7	318	Jr.	Rancho Cucamonga, CA
64	Travis Swanson	C	6-5	305	Sr.	Kingwood, TX
87	Austin Tate	TE	6-6	266	Sr.	Harrison
45	Myke Tavarres	LB	6-2	221	Jr.	Lake Oswego, OR
86	Brad Taylor	TE	6-4	243	Sr.	Springdale
98	Robert Thomas	DT	6-3	318	Sr.	Muskogee, OK
57	Nicholas Thomas-Smith	LB	5-10	225	Fr.	Chesterfield, MO
23	Scotty Thurman	WR	5-11	173	Fr.	Fayetteville
31	A.J. Turner	LB	6-2	208	So.	Lepanto
27	Alan Turner	S	6-0	198	Jr.	Junction City
46	Alex Voelzke	TE	6-6	247	So.	Longview, TX
24	Kody Walker	RB	6-2	244	So.	Jefferson City, MO
73	Jeremy Ward	OL	6-4	282	Fr.	Pottsville
21	Carroll Washington	CB	6-0	182	Jr.	Baltimore, MD
32	Jonathan Williams	RB	6-0	220	So.	Allen, TX
81	Demetrius Wilson	WR	6-3	181	Sr.	Glendale, AZ
6	JaMichael Winston	DE	6-5	254	Fr.	Mobile, AL
48	Deatrich Wise, Jr.	DE	6-6	265	Fr.	Carrollton, TX
25	Jojo Wynn	RB	5-9	200	Fr.	Darien, GA

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. Wilson	11	143.84	249	401	13	62.1	3387	21	80	307.9
B. Allen	5	69.23	21	49	3	42.9	186	1	30	37.2

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
C. Hamilton	12	90	1335	14.8	5	80	111.2
D. Johnson	12	25	160	6.4	2	25	13.3
C. Gragg	5	22	289	13.1	3	42	57.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Johnson	12	137	776	19	757	5.5	8	28	63.1
K. Davis	10	112	444	67	377	3.4	2	28	37.7
J. Williams	11	45	247	16	231	5.1	0	32	21.0

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: R. Rasner 92, R. Gaines 75, T. Williams 56
Tackles for loss: C. Smith 13, T. Flowers 13, R. Rasner 8
Sacks: C. Smith 9.5, T. Flowers 6, J. Green 3.5
Interceptions: R. Rasner 3, T. Mitchel 1, W. Hines 1, A. Turner 1

NOTEBOOK

Although a senior operating under a different defense under a different coordinator with different terminology, safety **Eric Bennett** said the Razorbacks spring seemed more defensively unified than his previous three Arkansas autumns.

"Last year we had a lot of miscommunications," Bennett said. "We have unit meetings now where before we never had unit meetings on defense. We always met as positions. That's another reason why we gave up a lot of big plays last year because nobody was never on the same page."

Bennett believes the defense that meets as a whole plays as a whole.

Senior defensive end **Chris Smith** says those previously forgotten linebackers — senior **Jarrett Lake**, and fourth-year juniors **Daunte Carr** and **Braylon Mitchell** — running first-team under Bielema inspires the whole team.

"Basically, he's brought hope to everybody," Smith said. "A lot of guys that didn't play last year are playing with the ones and showing their true talent. I think that's one thing he brought, the hope we can do this and be good."

Bielema knows hope must come within these Hogs because outside projections for 2013 weren't good even before the 4-8 crash last season following 10-3 and 11-2 successes.

"We have 21 seniors who are angry, frustrated, upset with the way things went and believe they have a higher spot in the world of college football," Bielema said. "I told them, 'Hey, we are Rocky, man. Nobody really thinks a lot of us right now. We are on the bottom fighting our way up and we are going to enjoy every minute of it."

• Upon his January arrival accompanying Bielema from Wisconsin, the Razorbacks didn't quite know what to make of new strength coach Ben Herbert.

From initially bemused, they quickly became eager to please "Coach Herb."

"When you first do things in there that he puts you through, you are kind of like OK, why are we doing this?" senior center **Travis Swanson** said. "But then the second set of it you start feeling things working more than they ever have in their life. You don't question it because you see the results and it's contagious."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On this year's team:** "I think up front the defense has got a chance to be good. It's their best in several years. I don't know offensively if they're going to be a contender. Offensively, they might be a year away with the quarterback situation. They've got a lot of good receivers, but I don't know if they've got a great one. They'll struggle at quarterback some."

• **On the program:** "Nobody has ever thought Arkansas had the best talent year in and year out in the SEC. There was so much discombobulation after the release of Bobby Petrino and with John L. Smith being there. Now, is there enough talent to recapture where it was when everything was going right? Probably not."

Rohan Gaines
Photo by RD Moore

Sophomores A.J. Turner and Otha Peters combined nine linebacker starts as 2012 true freshmen but were injured in the spring and the others passed them by.

"We said this when we got here," Ash said. "We don't care what anybody has done in the past. It's a clean slate for everybody. We're going to judge you based on what you do since our time here."

Ash did worry about safeties Rohan Gaines and Eric Bennett being too small, but said both practiced beyond their size and "they will hit you."

When healthy, Tevin Mitchel was considered Arkansas' best cornerback in 2012 and the most precociously pleasing freshman of 2011. The junior's spring only enhanced what Ash might have heard.

Redshirt freshman Jared Collins and sophomore Will Hines, a starter by 2012's end, compete hard at the corner.

Junior college transfers Tiquention Coleman, safety, and Carroll Washington, corner, provide depth.

Arkansas' veteran front four of ends Chris Smith and Trey Flowers, a senior and a junior, and senior tackles Byran Jones and Robert Thomas, are "the strength of our defense," Ash said.

The veterans, led by Smith, say they personally take Ash's praise as a challenge.

"That is a challenge and we are going to live up to that challenge," Smith said. "I always tell the defensive line you know the preseason hype doesn't mean anything. We have got to do it on Saturdays."

Defensive line coach Charlie Partridge, also Bielema's defensive line coach at Wisconsin, said young backups DeMarcus Hodge at tackle and Deatrich Wise at end take up the challenge, too.

"Hodge and Deatrich Wise are the next guys out of that young group making a jump," Partridge said.

One irony, while fanning the competition with his clean-slate approach, once Ash established a first unit, he mandated that it stay intact through the Red-White spring game finale.

"The ones have been the ones," Ash said. "They are creating some chemistry with each other. If you're shuffling guys in and out all the time, you're not going to create that continuity you need to be good."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Although without a special teams coach, Bielema insists his staff places a special emphasis on special teams. He says it's more special than ever.

"We will have nine of them," Bielema

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

C Travis Swanson

The Bobby Petrino regime practiced Swanson like a second-teamer while redshirting him in 2009. ... Swanson has started every game ever since and made second-team All-SEC in 2012 behind Alabama Outland Trophy winner Barrett Jones. ... New coach Bret Bielema and his assistants raved about him from the get-go. ... "Honestly on film I knew he was a good player but I didn't know he is as good as what he is," offensive line coach Sam Pittman said. "He can see things before they happen."

EMERGING STAR

RB Jonathan Williams

Bielema's offense accentuates running backs and sophomore Williams has the speed, size — 6-0, 220 — and experience as the returning leading rusher (45 for 231) on the 2012 team. ... Williams had Arkansas' longest run, 32 yards, and second longest reception, 77 yards, among eight catches for 208 yards and two TDs. ... Bielema and offensive coordinator Jim Chaney like his dash but crave more mash. "I asked him to describe himself and he said, 'elusive,'" Chaney said. "I told him I want 'physical.'"

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Carroll Washington

Arkansas needed depth in the secondary and brought in Washington, as well as safety Tiquention Coleman, from junior colleges for the spring semester. ... Washington, from Hartnell (Calif.) College, was rated the nation's No. 1 JC corner by one recruiting service. ... He had seven interceptions in his junior college career. ... Was working with the second team in the spring but will keep pushing for a starting job in the fall. ... Made six tackles in the final scrimmage.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	36.5	17
Rushing	148.9	69
Passing	333.7	4
Total	482.5	9
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.4	47
Rushing	162.6	71
Passing	185.3	20
Total	347.9	36
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.8	51

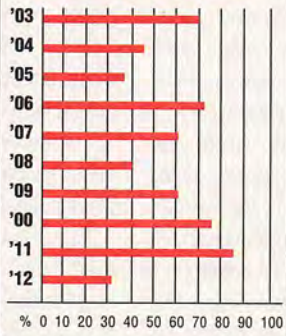
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	36.8	15
Rushing	137.4	81
Passing	300.7	13
Total	438.1	29
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.2	33
Rushing	167.6	74
Passing	195.2	25
Total	362.9	47
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	49

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	23.5	89
Rushing	118.7	104
Passing	301.5	21
Total	420.2	49
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	30.4	81
Rushing	124.1	19
Pass	285.8	113
Total	409.9	73
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 19	- 1.58	118

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

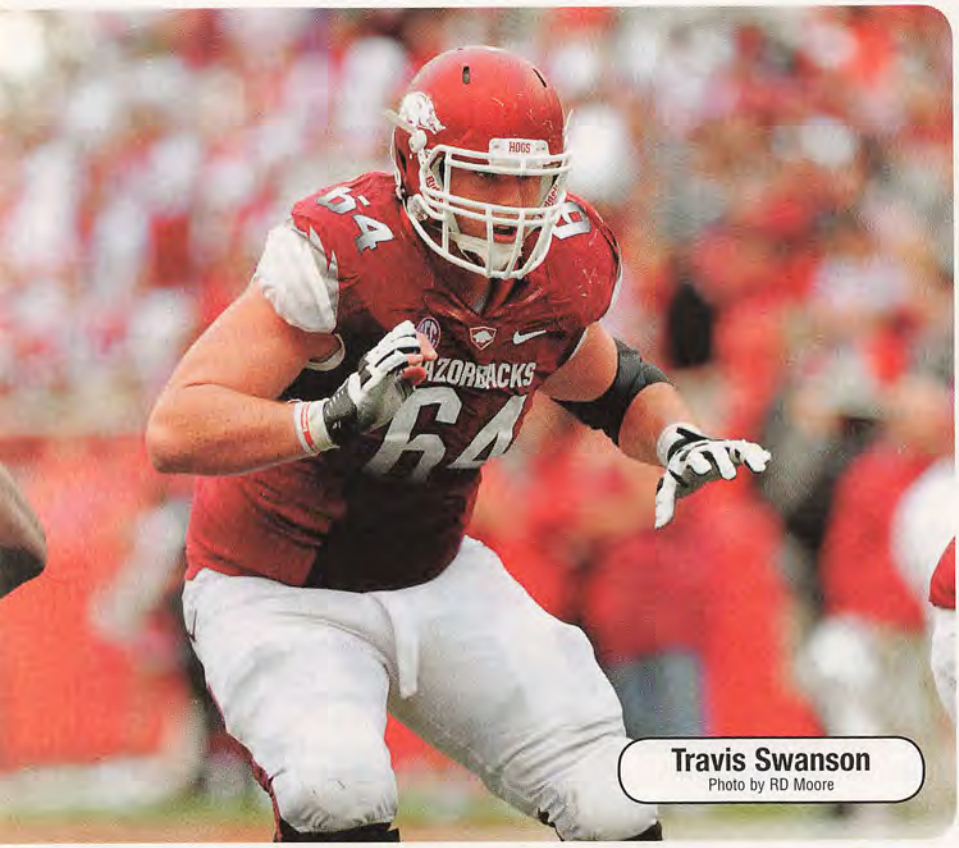


RESULTS

4-8, 2-6

W	JACKSONVILLE STATE	49-24
L	ULM (OT)	31-34
L	ALABAMA	0-52
L	RUTGERS	26-35
L	at Texas A&M	10-58
W	at Auburn	24-7
W	KENTUCKY	49-7
L	OLE MISS	27-30
W	TULSA	19-15
L	at South Carolina	20-38
L	at Mississippi State	14-45
L	LSU	13-20

PLAYER PROFILE



Travis Swanson
Photo by RD Moore

Swanson Leads With Strength and Smarts

Arkansas' center of attention truly is a center of attention.

For a new offensive line coach, part of a new Razorbacks staff, it doesn't start better than with fifth-year senior center Travis Swanson, All-SEC second-teamer last year.

"Every time you start a line, you start it with who plays that spot," said Sam Pittman, the offensive line coach new to Arkansas, but with 27 years of coaching experience.

"He's a very good person to lean on whether it be the quarterback or the guards who haven't played much next to him. Even for me as a coach it's a calming factor knowing you have a guy that cares so much for the team that plays well."

Bret Bielema, Arkansas' new coach after taking Wisconsin to three Rose Bowls during his 2005 to 2012 tenure, doesn't believe he's coached a better center, including Wisconsin All-Americans Peter Konz and Travis Frederick.

"I had a center (Konz) two years (ago) that left early and was a second-round pick to the (Atlanta) Falcons," Bielema said.

"This year my center from Wisconsin (Frederick) declared early, an indication that's he's going to be an early draft pick. I think Travis Swanson potentially is probably better than both of those guys could be. Travis Swanson is probably the best center in college football."

What sets Swanson apart?

"He's 6-5 and around 300 to 305 pounds and he's got unbelievable quick foot speed and hands and he understands defenses," Pittman said. "So he's exactly what you like to have at the center spot."

Under the training regime of new strength coach Ben Herbert, Swanson said he's never felt bigger nor more athletic.

"I feel lighter than I ever have, but I weigh the most that I ever have," Swanson said. "That's the best of both worlds. That goes to Coach Herb."

The knowledge though, comes from Swanson, says Bielema, Pittman and offensive coordinator Jim Chaney.

"Swanson's brain is working faster than I can even think," Chaney said. "His brain works at great speed. It's a big asset for our offense to have a super smart center."

said. "Every coach will be involved in some aspect of the kicking game."

Other than the fixtures of senior three-year letterman place-kicker/kickoff man Zach Hocker — 11 of 18 field goals and 32 for 32 on PATs in 2012 — and junior two-year letterman snapper Alan D'Appollonio, the nine have much to do.

Superb four-year letterman punter Dylan Breeding has graduated. Hocker and incoming JC All-American Sam Irwin-Hill will challenge to succeed Breeding.

Sophomore Nate Holmes is the leading returner of a return game without many happy returns in 2012.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Nobody would have predicted it for the Razorbacks beginning the 2012 season nationally 10th ranked, but their season's second game against 30-point underdog Louisiana-Monroe proved by far their most important game.

ULM upset Arkansas, 34-31, in Little Rock, foretelling a 4-8 Arkansas disaster.

So, for 2013, call Arkansas' opening three games — Louisiana-Lafayette, Samford and Southern Mississippi — as the Razorbacks' most important. Losing any of the three forecasts no cushion, followed by Rutgers, then an SEC gauntlet of Texas A&M, Florida, South Carolina, national champion Alabama, Auburn, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and LSU.

Nine of Arkansas' 12 foes played in bowl games last season.

— Nate Allen

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	LOUISIANA	9-4
Sept. 7	vs. Samford	7-4
Sept. 14	SOUTHERN MISS.	0-12
Sept. 21	at Rutgers	9-4
Sept. 28	TEXAS A&M	11-2
Oct. 5	at Florida	11-2
Oct. 12	SOUTH CAROLINA	11-2
Oct. 19	at Alabama	13-1
Nov. 2	AUBURN	3-9
Nov. 9	at Ole Miss	7-6
Nov. 23	vs. Mississippi State	8-5
Nov. 30	at LSU	10-3

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Rhett Lashlee **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ellis Johnson** **STADIUM: Jordan-Hare Stadium: 87,451**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
3-9 overall, 0-8 SEC (7th, West)

COACH:
Gus Malzahn — At Auburn: first year; overall: 9-3, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS:
14: 6 offense; 6 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Cameron Artis-Payne, RB Tre Mason, C Reese Dismukes, HB/TE C.J. Uzomah, FB Jay Prosch, WR Sammie Coates, DE Dee Ford, DT Angelo Blackson, LB Justin Garrett

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
A warp-speed offense. Artis-Payne, Mason and Corey Grant give the Tigers a mature group of tailbacks. After a year of growing pains, the offensive line returns plenty of untapped talent and experience. The H-back/FB position is loaded. The defensive line is solid across the board, as is the cornerback position. The kicking game should be steady.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The Tigers' QB situation is still unsettled. The pass rush at right defensive end needs to be upgraded. Inexperience at receiver and linebacker. Numbers at safety.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Onterio McCalebb, TE Philip Lutzenkirchen, WR Emory Blake, LB Daren Bates

OVERVIEW:
Gus Malzahn's return has been a huge morale booster for the team. He recruited a lot of players on the current roster and it's obvious that he is well-respected by the 100-plus Tigers ready to get the program back to respectability. Even though it seems like a tall task, if Auburn finds a QB, it could be a lot better than expected. A talented incoming recruiting class should also give the team a major boost.

It's A New Day: Malzahn wants Tigers to get their 'edge' back

To put it bluntly, 2012 was a strenuous one for the Auburn program — and its fans.

After enduring a trying offseason and new offensive and defensive coordinators that really didn't seem to coincide with the squad's personnel, last year's team suffered through the school's first winless season in conference play since 1980. It was also the first Tigers' team since 1998 to conclude the year with just three wins.

As a result, 2010 national championship-winning head coach Gene Chizik — and his staff — were relieved of their duties, and former offensive coordinator Gus Malzahn was handed the keys to the program.

"Coach Malzahn was our choice because he is a proven winner who has been successful at every level," said Auburn athletic director Jay Jacobs.

"He is one of the brightest minds in college football, and he knows what it takes to build a championship program at Auburn. In addition to being a great coach, he will also be an outstanding ambassador for Auburn University."

Malzahn is a familiar face to the Auburn faithful. His fast-paced, big-play offense was a huge reason why the Tigers lured future Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Cam Newton to the Plains in the winter of 2009 — which eventually led to the Tigers' first concensus national title since 1957. His offense is another reason why many long-standing offensive records crumbled under his direction.

But Malzahn and his staff won't be the ones playing this year when the Tigers open at home against Washington State on August 31. Instead it will be a group of Auburn players who seem to have completely bought into the "It's A New Day" attitude that will feature a fast-and-physical approach on both sides of the ball.

In fact, the team appears to have taken on the direction of the new staff, which should only help when it's time to bang heads for real.

"They (the team) have really improved," Malzahn said.

"They've come a long way. I really feel like we have gotten mentally tougher. We've also gotten physically tougher. Our No. 1 thing is to get our edge back. We've strained our guys. It's been a very physical spring and I feel good about how they've responded."

"We have some deficiencies there's no doubt," added Malzahn. "But this spring we tried to identify our strengths and tried to identify what areas we need to improve on. Some of it's depth. But I like our attitude. I like where we are going. But we've not arrived by any means."

OFFENSE

The battle for the starting quarterback gig will carry on into the summer.

Kiehl Frazier and Jonathan Wallace got the bulk of the work in spring practice, but junior college transfer Nick Marshall and highly touted prep signee Jeremy Johnson, both talented dual-threats, will get a chance to showcase what they can do when they arrive for fall camp.

Considering Malzahn's offense is predicated off a power running game, it was imperative that Auburn develop depth at running back during spring practice.

Junior college transfer Cameron Artis-Payne has the look of a future star. The powerfully built tailback wowed coaches and teammates during the spring and parlayed that into a great performance at the Tigers' slam-packed

Tre Mason
Photo by John Reed-USA TODAY Sports

A-Day Game. Artis-Payne and returning 1,000-yard rusher Tre Mason, who battled an ankle injury this spring, should give Auburn a dynamic one-two punch at tailback. Speedster Corey Grant will also vie for touches.

"I feel a lot better about it now that we've gone through spring," Malzahn said about the tailback position. "We do have some depth and all three of those guys are capable of helping us."

Jay Prosch never really found a home in Auburn's offense a year ago, but don't expect that to be the case this season. The bruising blocker will play the halfback/tight end/fullback role in Malzahn's offense and should be a major factor in the success of the run game.

C.J. Uzomah is another guy to keep an eye on. He will play the same positions as Prosch for the most part, but Uzomah is an athletic player with solid hands and great size (6-4, 253). Brandon Fulse and Ricky Parks are similarly built to Uzomah, and they could have a big impact on the passing game as receivers and blockers.

Although the Tigers don't have a lot of experience at receiver, in part due to an inept offense a year ago, guys like Sammie Coates, Jaylon Denson, Trovon Reed, Quan Bray and Ricardo Lewis will have a chance to emerge as go-to targets. Coates, a big, physical wideout, has an uncanny ability to make tough grabs in traffic. Denson was singled out by coaches for his play in the spring.

Auburn is loaded with a number of talented young linemen, but recruiting stars and high school accolades can only get a team so far in the nation's best conference.

"I like where we are at," Malzahn said about his O-line. "We are young and we are inexperienced, but there is potential for the future to be pretty good."

Center Reese Dismukes has 23 starts under his belt and will anchor the unit. Young tackles Patrick Miller and Greg Robinson have NFL potential if they continue to develop.

DEFENSE

Auburn's defense will transition from a 4-3 base defense to a 4-2-5 under the direction of veteran coordinator Ellis Johnson.

The new-look D will feature a hybrid safety/linebacker position called the "Star," which will be manned by one of the most talked about players in spring, Justin Garrett. The "Star" position allows Johnson to have three safeties (or three players who are adept at playing the run or pass) on the field at all times in an effort to combat high-powered offenses.

"I feel like I should excel at the position," Garrett said. "I feel like I'm good playing in space. We are going to do

Jermaine Whitehead
Photo by Michael Wade

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jonathan Wallace	So.	Wallace had better A-Day Game; spot still up for grabs.	Kiehl Frazier, Jr.
RB	Tre Mason*	Jr.	Hard worker coming off a 1,000-yard rushing season.	C. Artis-Payne, Jr. /C. Grant, Jr.
FB/HB	Jay Prosch*	Sr.	Punishing blocker should thrive in Malzahn's offense.	WR/HB/FB C.J. Uzomah, Jr.
WR	Jaylon Denson	Jr.	Been a spring surprise; could be solid deep threat.	Brandon Fulse, Jr.
WR	Trovon Reed	Jr.	Should be ready to thrive in new offense.	Quan Bray, Jr.
WR	Sammie Coates	So.	Can make tough grabs, but must focus on easy ones.	Ricardo Louis, So.
RT	Patrick Miller*	So.	Tall, athletic player who likes to hit.	Shon Coleman, Fr.
RG	Chad Slade*	Jr.	Up-tempo offense might suit him well.	Jordan Diamond, Fr.
C	Reese Dismukes*	Jr.	Coaches have raved about maturation.	Tunde Fariyike, Jr.
LG	Alex Kozan	Fr.	Strong at the point of attack; scrappy player.	Shane Callahan, Fr.
LT	Greg Robinson*	So.	Can be as good as he wants to be.	Avery Young, So.
K	Cody Parkey*	Sr.	Accurate kicker with powerful leg; clutch.	Alex Kviklys, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Dee Ford*	Sr.	Team's best pass rusher; veteran presence.	Craig Sanders, Sr.
DT	Angelo Blackson*	Jr.	Big, athletic tackle could be on verge of stardom.	Jeffrey Whitaker, Sr.*
DT	Gabe Wright	Jr.	Had solid spring; good run stopper.	Ben Bradley, So.
DE	Kenneth Carter	Sr.	Moved to end from tackle; offers good size.	Nosa Eguae, Sr.
LB	JaViere Mitchell	Fr.	Had a good spring; likes contact.	Cassanova McKinzy, So.
LB	Kris Frost	So.	Former 5-star athlete finally gets chance.	Jake Holland, Sr.*
STAR	Justin Garrett	Jr.	Talk of spring; Johnson loves this guy.	Robenson Therezie, Jr.
CB	Chris Davis*	Sr.	Steady player could have big final season.	Joshua Holsey, So.
CB	Jonathon Mincy	Jr.	Could be poised for breakout season.	Jonathan Jones, So.
S	Jermaine Whitehead*	Jr.	Had "fantastic" spring, according to Johnson.	Trent Fisher, Jr.
S	Brandon King	Jr.	JC transfer expected to come in and start.	Khari Harding, Fr.
P	Steven Clark*	Sr.	Solid punter who gets excellent hang time on kicks.	Alex Locker, Fr.

*Returning Starter

TIGERS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Carl Lawson
Lawson possesses the most explosive first step of any prospect in the class of 2013. The Georgia native is tremendously strong in both his upper and lower body. With the loss of Corey Lemonier to the NFL Draft, Lawson could become the team's top pass rusher right away.

Montravius Adams
Gus Malzahn and new defensive line coach Rodney Garner reeled a huge fish in Adams late in the process. Adams has elite potential due to a rare combination of size and athleticism. The Tigers had a hard time stopping the run in 2012, so Adams is a welcome addition.

Ben Bradley
Bradley comes in as one of the top JC defensive linemen in the country, and he is a big piece to the 2013 class for the Tigers. He will have a chance to join forces with Adams to improve the Auburn run defense, while also possessing the quickness to push the pocket and generate pressure.

THE SLEEPER

Nick Marshall
The Tigers certainly have many high-profile signees, but Nick Marshall flies a bit low by comparison. A former UGA signee as a defensive back, Marshall now plays quarterback. He told AuburnSports.com that winning the Heisman Trophy was a goal. He definitely doesn't aim low.

Committments	23
Average Stars	3.57
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	9
★★★☆☆	12
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	82
National Rank: 8th (tie)	SEC: 5

2014 NEEDS: The Tigers cleaned up at offensive tackle in 2012, but didn't sign a prospect at the position in 2013. That puts Auburn in a position where it will need to bring in some tackles in 2014, but it isn't necessary to go after prospects that can play right away. Auburn will also look to bring in a top tier running back for the next class, and a couple of fast, athletic linebackers who can dominate in Ellis Johnson's 4-2-5 defense.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Montravius Adams	DT	6-3	290	★★★★★	Vienna, GA	Dooly County
No. 3 prospect in the state of Georgia and the nation's No. 3 defensive tackle by Rivals.com. Racked up 44 sacks in high school career.						
Mackenro Alexander	DB	6-0	190	★★★	Immokalee, FL	Immokalee
Rated as the No. 46 ranked safety in the country by Rivals.com. Chose Auburn over offers from Arkansas, Rutgers, Louisville and Ole Miss.						
Cameron Artis-Payne	RB	5-11	210	★★★★	Santa Maria, CA	Allan Hancock C.C.
Rated as the No. 6 JC prospect in the country by Rivals.com. Rushed for more than 3,300 yards and 43 touchdowns in JC career.						
Peyton Barber	RB	5-10	211	★★★	Alpharetta, GA	Milton
Missed 2011 season with leg injury, but rushed for more than 1,500 yards and 22 touchdowns in 2012. Rated as the No. 44 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Ben Bradley	DT	6-2	315	★★★★	Hutchinson, KS	Hutchinson C.C.
Rated as the No. 4 JC prospect in the country by Rivals.com. Originally from Norcross, Georgia. Had 39 tackles and six tackles for loss in 2011.						
Daniel Carlson	K	6-5	195	★★★	Colorado Springs, CO	Classical Academy
Rated as the No. 4 kicker in the nation by Rivals.com. Also rated as the No. 6 overall prospect in Colorado. U.S. Army All-American.						
Elijah Daniel	DE	6-3	249	★★★★	Avon, IN	Avon
Under Armour All-American and Rivals250 slection. Rated as the No. 8 strongside defensive end in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Devonte Danzey	OL	6-3	285	★★★	Hutchinson, KS	Hutchinson C.C.
Rated as the No. 19 JC prospect in the nation by Rivals.com and as the top JC offensive lineman in the 2013 class.						
Marcus Davis	ATH	5-11	170	★★★	Delray Beach, FL	American Heritage School
Played quarterback in high school, but will likely play slot receiver at Auburn. Rated as the No. 41 athlete in the country by Rivals.com.						
Kenny Flowers	LB	6-2	225	★★★	Hutchinson, KS	Hutchinson C.C.
Originally from Lilburn, Georgia. Rated as the nation's No. 61 JC prospect by Rivals.com and is the No. 9 JC linebacker.						
Johnathan Ford	RB	5-11	190	★★★★	New Hope, AL	New Hope
Rivals250 selection who rushed for 1,466 yards and 24 touchdowns in eight games in 2012. Rated as No. 15 running back in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Khari Harding	DB	6-1	205	★★★	Edmond, OK	Santa Fe
Chose Auburn over offers from Arizona State, Arkansas and Indiana. Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Oklahoma by Rivals.com.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jeremy Johnson	QB	6-6	215	★★★★	Montgomery, AL	Carver
U.S. Army All-American who is a Rivals100 selection and the No. 5 pro-style quarterback in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Brandon King	DB	6-2	210	★★★	Highland, KS	Highland C.C.
Originally from Alabaster, Ala. Had 118 tackles and earned first-team All-Jayhawk Conference honors in 2012 at JC.						
Carl Lawson	DE	6-2	253	★★★★★	Alpharetta, GA	Milton
Rated as the top weakside defensive in prospect in America by Rivals.com and the No. 2 player in Georgia. Rivals100 selection.						
Nick Marshall	QB	6-2	190	★★★	Garden City, KS	Garden City C.C.
Former UGA signee as a defensive back, but now plays quarterback. Rated as the No. 43 JC prospect in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Kamryn Melton	DB	5-10	165	★★★	Dothan, AL	Dothan
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Alabama and the No. 35 cornerback in the country by Rivals.com. Committed to Auburn a year before he signed.						
Deon Mix	OL	6-4	305	★★★★	Batesville, MS	South Panola
U.S. Army All-American and rated as the No. 15 offensive guard in the country by Rivals.com. Also the No. 5 prospect in Mississippi.						
Earnest Robinson	WR	6-3	200	★★★★	Pinson Valley, AL	Pinson Valley
Under Armour All-American and rated as the No. 7 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com. Rivals250 selection and No. 14 wide receiver in the nation.						
Jason Smith	ATH	6-1	187	★★★★	Mobile, AL	McGill Toolen
Labeled as an athlete, but will start out at quarterback in Auburn. Rivals250 selection and rated as the No. 11 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com.						
Tony Stevens	WR	6-3	175	★★★★	Orlando, FL	Evans
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the nation's No. 11 wide receiver by Rivals.com and top 20 prospect in Florida.						
Cameron Toney	LB	6-3	225	★★★	Huntsville, AL	Huntsville
Rated as the No. 35 inside linebacker in the country and as the No. 18 overall prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com. Had 110 tackles and six sacks in 2011.						
Dominic Walker	WR	6-2	195	★★★	Orlando, FL	Evans
Averaged 17.4 yards per catch in 2011 and 19.8 yards per catch in 2012. Rated as the No. 95 receiver in the nation by Rivals.com.						

TIGERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
74	Will Adams	OL	6-7	293	Fr.	Tyrone, GA
44	Cameron Artis-Payne	RB	5-11	208	Jr.	Harrisburg, PA
79	Eric Averett	OL	6-3	252	Fr.	Enterprise
57	Gage Batten	LB	6-0	231	Fr.	Palm Beach Gardens, FL
98	Angelo Blackson	DL	6-4	312	Jr.	Bear, DE
68	Kyle Bolstad	OL	6-4	280	Fr.	Brentwood, TN
50	Ben Bradley	DT	6-1	310	So.	Norcross, GA
4	Quan Bray	WR	5-10	183	Jr.	LaGrange, GA
97	Reid Brooks	DE	6-2	230	Fr.	Dothan
77	Shane Callahan	OL	6-6	290	Fr.	Parker, CO
85	Wirth Campbell	TE	6-3	215	So.	Nashville, TN
92	Kenneth Carter	DT	6-4	287	Sr.	Greenville
30	Steven Clark	P	6-5	232	Sr.	Kansas City, MO
83	Michael Clifton	TE	6-3	251	Fr.	Evans, GA
18	Sammie Coates	WR	6-2	201	So.	Leroy
72	Shon Coleman	OL	6-6	294	Fr.	Memphis, TN
53	Devonte Danzey	OL	6-4	284	So.	Tampa, FL
11	Chris Davis	CB	5-11	198	Sr.	Birmingham
28	T.J. Davis	DB	6-1	194	Fr.	Tallahassee, FL
67	Delondre DeJarnett	DL	6-2	291	Fr.	Clanton
52	Justin Delaine	DE	6-5	240	Jr.	Linden
89	Jaylon Denson	WR	6-3	216	Jr.	Hoover
76	Jordan Diamond	OL	6-6	314	Fr.	Chicago, IL
50	Reese Dismukes	C	6-3	290	Jr.	Spanish Fort
17	Ben Durand	QB	6-3	200	So.	Tyngsborough, MA
38	Adam Dyas	DB	5-9	200	Jr.	Mobile
94	Nosa Eguae	DE	6-3	268	Sr.	Mansfield, TX
65	Tunde Fariyike	OL	6-2	307	Jr.	Thomaston, GA
31	Trent Fisher	DB	6-1	200	Jr.	Nashville, TN
95	Dee Ford	DE	6-2	238	Sr.	Odenville
10	Kiehl Frazier	QB	6-2	234	Jr.	Springdale, AR
17	Kris Frost	LB	6-2	231	So.	Matthews, NC
11	Brandon Fulse	TE	6-4	264	Jr.	Fort Meade, FL
26	Justin Garrett	LB	6-1	214	Jr.	Tucker, GA
58	Harris Gaston	LB	6-1	235	Sr.	Birmingham
20	Corey Grant	RB	5-11	201	Jr.	Opelika
45	Keymiya Harrell	DE	6-4	262	So.	Selma
64	Forrest Hill	DS	6-1	242	Jr.	Jonesboro, GA
5	Jake Holland	LB	6-1	243	Sr.	Pelham
15	Joshua Holsey	DB	5-11	195	So.	Fairburn, GA
3	Jonathan Jones	DB	5-10	172	So.	Carrollton, GA
63	Alex Kozan	OL	6-4	292	Fr.	Castle Rock, CO
39	Alex Kviklys	K	6-1	185	So.	Marietta, GA
33	Chris Landrum	LB	6-3	242	So.	Sweet Water
70	Robert Leff	OL	6-6	284	Fr.	Fairhope
59	Jake Lembke	DS	6-2	240	Sr.	New Lenox, IL
41	Alex Locker	P	6-3	201	Fr.	Westford, MA
6	Ricardo Louis	WR	6-2	217	So.	Miami Beach, FL
41	Patrick Lymon	RB	5-10	188	Jr.	Huntsville
21	Tre Mason	RB	5-10	196	Jr.	Palm Beach, FL
33	Duncan McKinney	K	5-11	181	So.	Florence
30	Cassanova McKinzy	LB	6-3	245	So.	Birmingham
12	Demetruce McNeal	DB	6-2	194	Sr.	College Park, GA
51	Patrick Miller	OL	6-7	283	So.	West Palm Beach, FL
21	Jonathon Mincy	DB	5-10	191	Jr.	East Atlanta, GA
18	JaViere Mitchell	LB	6-2	211	Fr.	Leeds
61	C.T. Moorman	DS	6-0	230	So.	Durham, NC
91	Tyler Nero	DL	6-2	266	Fr.	Atmore
93	JaBrian Niles	DL	6-2	305	So.	Mobile
19	Tate O'Connor	QB	6-2	197	So.	Savannah, GA
10	LaDarius Owens	LB	6-2	248	Jr.	Bessemer
69	Joshua Parker	OL	6-0	290	Sr.	Cullman
36	Cody Parkey	K	6-0	186	Sr.	Jupiter, FL
46	Ricky Parks	TE	6-4	257	Fr.	Hogansville, GA
32	Blake Poole	DB	5-11	189	Sr.	Buchanan, GA
84	Austin Powell	WR	6-0	185	Jr.	Birmingham
42	Gimel President	DE	6-4	250	Fr.	Mt. Pleasant, SC
35	Jay Prosch	FB	6-0	247	Sr.	Mobile
82	Melvin Ray	WR	6-3	218	So.	Tallahassee, FL
1	Trovon Reed	WR	6-0	190	Jr.	Thibodaux, LA
86	Dimitri Reese	WR	5-11	175	Jr.	Birmingham
73	Greg Robinson	OL	6-5	314	So.	Thibodaux, LA
13	Craig Sanders	DE	6-4	242	Sr.	Clio
42	Chandler Shakespeare	RB	5-10	208	Sr.	Oxford
62	Chad Slade	OL	6-5	308	Jr.	Moody
24	Ryan Smith	DB	6-2	197	Sr.	Cordova
40	Spencer Smith	TE	6-6	240	Fr.	Birmingham
46	Jordan Spriggs	DB	5-9	199	Jr.	Mobile
53	Michael Sulka	DS	6-3	244	Fr.	Bluffton, SC
44	Anthony Swain	LB	6-2	235	So.	Gadsden
27	Robenson Therezie	DB	5-9	202	Jr.	Miami, FL
60	Jackson Thomas	DL	6-1	250	Fr.	Birmingham
39	B.J. Trimble	WR	5-10	158	So.	Fayetteville, GA
81	C.J. Uzomah	TE	6-4	253	Jr.	Suwanee, GA
29	Mack VanGorder	DB	6-1	190	So.	Gainesville, GA
12	Jonathan Wallace	QB	6-2	209	So.	Phenix City
99	Brian Walsh	DL	6-3	312	So.	Winter Springs, FL
54	Jeffrey Whitaker	DT	6-4	307	Sr.	Warner Robins, GA
87	Mark White	WR	5-10	180	Fr.	Montgomery
19	Ryan White	DB	5-11	196	Sr.	Tallahassee, FL
9	Jermaine Whitehead	DB	5-11	198	Jr.	Greenwood, MS
37	Andrew Williams	RB	5-9	200	So.	Leroy
78	Colton Wingard	OL	6-2	295	So.	Alabaster
90	Gabe Wright	DL	6-3	300	Jr.	Columbus, GA
32	Taylor Yancey	K	6-4	199	Fr.	Castle Rock, CO
56	Avery Young	OL	6-6	314	So.	Palm Beach Gardens, FL
47	Patrick Young	FB	6-4	229	Jr.	Trussville

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Frazier	9	99.87	62	116	8	53.4	753	2	54	83.7
J. Wallace	9	139.60	46	80	4	57.5	720	4	51	80.0

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
E. Blake	12	50	789	15.8	3	54	65.8
O. McCalebb	12	18	132	7.3	0	34	11.0
P. Lutzenkirchen	6	15	139	9.3	0	38	23.2

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. Mason	12	171	1038	36	1002	5.9	8	86	83.5
O. McCalebb	12	94	639	69	570	6.1	6	43	47.5
M. Blakely	6	33	158	5	153	4.6	0	20	25.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: D. Bates 94, D. McNeal 90, J. Whitehead 86
Tackles for loss: D. McNeal 7, A. Blackson 7, D. Ford 6.5
Sacks: D. Ford 6, C. Lemonier 5.5, D. Bates 2
Interceptions: D. Bates 1, T. Fisher 1

NOTEBOOK

For the most part, Auburn stayed relatively healthy during the spring. Sophomore defensive end **Keymiya Harrell** injured his right knee at the beginning stages of spring practice, but should be back for the regular season.

• New DC **Ellis Johnson** on why he runs the 4-2-5 instead of a 3-4: "Last time I was in a 3-4 was probably with Clemson in the mid-90s, and loved it. But offenses have spread out since then. And what you need to do is put faster players on the field so you don't end up with 235, 240, 250-pound linebackers out in space trying to make plays."

• Johnson on the players picking up his defense: "I've been very pleased with it."

• Johnson on finding the player for the "Star" position: "When we came in we had to identify that guy, so we looked at our linebacker corps. This is a defense that was built on the 4-3 and we had about 14 linebackers on the depth chart, so we felt like the two fastest guys we had were **JaViere Mitchell** and **Justin (Garrett)** from talking to the strength and conditioning coach. So we put those two guys at Star safety to start spring ball."

• Converted corner **Robenson Therezie** will back up Garrett at the Star position. Johnson said "he's really starting to come around."

• New strength and conditioning coach **Ryan Russell** has been a hit with his new team. Due to the pace at which the Tigers will play, being in shape will be paramount.

• Due to their size, hands and versatility, **Jay Prosch**, **C.J. Uzomah**, **Brandon Fulse** and **Ricky Parks** are all prototypical halfbacks, but they will be deployed in multiple roles in Malzahn's offense. Uzomah and Fulse could be deadly in the red zone in one-on-one matchups.

• Wide receiver **Jaylon Denson** had a great spring. His marked improvement should only help a young but talented receiving corps.

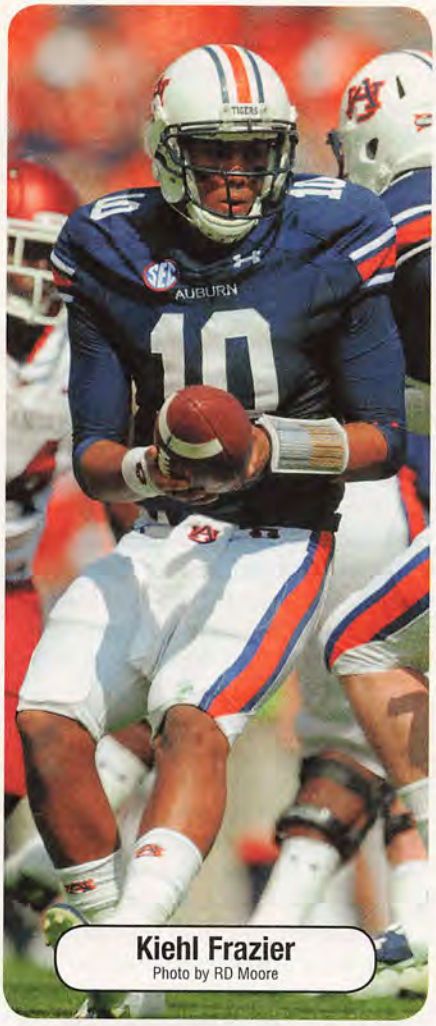
• The record-setting A-Day Game crowd of 83,401 was a big boost to the team according to Malzahn. "That ought to give them great confidence knowing that our fans are supporting us. I know it made our coaches feel great."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On this year's team:** "Auburn will be better than they were last year. I thought they were way underachieving. Not that they were real talented, but they were more talented than their record (0-8 SEC).

"They didn't have a quarterback who could do close to what they wanted to do last year. It will be interesting to see if their quarterback can do what Gus Malzahn wants him to do because he (Kiehl Frazier) pretty much ran Gus' offense in high school. Frazier may thrive in that system. I wouldn't be surprised if he doesn't rebound and have a pretty decent year compared to what he had last year.

"It's not like Auburn doesn't have enough talent on defense to be pretty decent. I don't think they'll be a great team, but maybe 6-6, 7-5, maybe 8-4 if they get lucky. I expect them to be a bowl team."



Kiehl Frazier
Photo by RD Moore

a lot of blitzing, coverage and playing man against the slot wide receiver, so I feel like, with my frame and my athletic ability, it fits me well."

The Tigers have a lot of experience returning up front, but the team will need better production all across the board if it wants to make marked improvement on defense. Senior Dee Ford is a leader and the team's best pass rusher. He will anchor the left end position. Kenneth Carter and Nosa Eguae are in line to man the right end position, but Johnson would like to see more pass rush from that spot. Highly touted signees Carl Lawson and Elijah Daniel, gifted ends, may be able to help in that area when they arrive in the fall.

The tackle play was steady all spring, according to Johnson. But he did mention that he would like to see more inside push from the group on passing downs. Angelo Blackson, Gabe Wright, Jeffrey Whitaker and junior college signee Ben Bradley should form a nice rotation up front. Blackson has the size (6-4, 312) and athletic ability to be a force.

Kris Frost rarely saw the field a year ago, but he's in line for the starting "MIKE" linebacker spot in Johnson's defense. Frost, a former receiver in high school, brings a lot of size and athletic ability to a position in dire need on playmakers.

JaViere Mitchell, Cassanova McKinzy and Anthony Swain are in competition at the "WILL" position. Mitchell suffered a concussion in spring, which held him back a little, but Johnson is high on him. Right now he'd likely be the starter.

The secondary, in particular cornerback, could actually be a strength if signees Brandon King and Khari Harding can team with Jermaine Whitehead to make an impact at safety.

Chris Davis and Jonathon Mincy have secured the top two cornerback spots and Joshua Holsey and Jonathan Jones will supply top-flight depth. Holsey played safety some toward the end of spring due to Demetruce McNeal's absence and a sheer lack of numbers at the position.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Auburn's special teams should be in good shape with the return of Cody Parkey and Steven Clark. The strong-legged Parkey nailed 11 of 14 field-goal attempts

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Tre Mason

Although Auburn's offense struggled for the entire season last year, Mason was one player that gave the team consistent effort and production from his tailback position. ... Became first non-QB since Bo Jackson (1985) to lead Auburn in total offense. ... Rushed 171 times for 1,002 yards and eight touchdowns in '12. ... Averaged 5.9 yards per rush. Had a career-high 181 yards rushing against Alabama A&M. ... Mason's speed and deceptive power should mesh well in Malzahn's offense.

EMERGING STAR

Justin Garrett

He will man the "Star" position in Ellis Johnson's defense, and the longtime coordinator is very high on the junior's abilities. ... Has good speed and athleticsm and showed good striking ability during the spring. ... Scored on a fumble return in the A-Day Game while delivering some punishing hits. ... Film junkie ... Really worked on his man-coverage skills in spring.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Cameron Artis-Payne

Auburn needed a big back in Malzahn's offense and junior college transfer Cameron Artis-Payne fits the bill to a T. ... The powerfully built Artis-Payne had a game-high 18 carries for 117 yards and a score in the spring game. He also added two catches for 47 yards. ... Has a similar running style to former Tiger tailback Rudi Johnson. ... Should be a very capable runner in short-yardage and goal-line situations.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	41.2	7
Rushing	284.8	5
Passing	214.4	66
Total	499.2	7
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.1	53
Rushing	109.1	9
Passing	259.3	108
Total	368.4	60
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.36	33

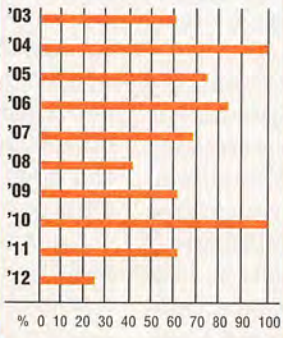
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.7	70
Rushing	182.3	32
Passing	155.5	105
Total	337.9	100
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.9	78
Rushing	189.2	94
Passing	218.8	51
Total	408.0	81
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.15	44

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	18.7	112
Rushing	148.4	78
Passing	156.6	112
Total	305.0	115
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.3	66
Rushing	197.6	97
Passing	222.9	47
Total	420.5	79
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 12	- 1.00	106

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
3-9, 0-8

L	vs. Clemson (Atlanta, GA)	19-26
L	at Mississippi State	10-28
W	ULM (OT)	31-28
L	LSU	10-12
L	ARKANSAS	7-24
L	at Ole Miss	20-41
L	at Vanderbilt	13-17
L	TEXAS A&M	21-63
W	NEW MEXICO STATE	42-7
L	GEORGIA	0-38
W	ALABAMA A&M	51-7
L	at Alabama	0-49

PLAYER PROFILE

C.J. UZOMAH
Photo by Melissa Hazeldine-Auburn Athletic Dept.

Uzomah Steps Into Lutz's Old Role

When current head coach Gus Malzahn was the offensive coordinator at Auburn from 2009-11, his offensive coaching philosophy allowed then-tight end/H-back Philip Lutzenkirchen to thrive. Lutzenkirchen became a major focal point of the team's offense during his time in the Gus Bus' O and helped the Tigers to their first concensus national title since 1957.

But like the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. Lutzenkirchen is now in the NFL and the guy that's trying to step into his old role, C.J. Uzomah, is working hard to be a major factor in this year's offense. Uzomah remembers what his predecessor taught him.

"Lutz is a great guy on and off the field," said the former highly successful quarterback at North Gwinnett High School, one of the premier prep programs in Georgia. "He told me to pay attention to the little things. And do it in practice so you won't think about it as much in the game."

After seeing limited time in 2011 as a true freshman, which ironically included a touchdown pass to Lutzenkirchen on a trick play, Uzomah had seven catches for 136 yards and a score a year ago. His 19.4 yards per catch was the best among players who had seven or more receptions, and his ability to catch-and-run showed the rangy athlete's upside as a potential playmaker in the passing game.

"C.J. was a quarterback in high school," Malzahn said. "I actually recruited him. He's got great potential. He's a smart guy. He understands the offense from a different perspective in the fact that he was a quarterback. He's very athletic and he's very tough too."

This season, Uzomah is being counted on to give AU a dangerous receiving threat and to help create stability at the halfback/tight end/fullback position in Malzahn's lightning fast offense. If all goes as planned, Uzomah, a business marketing major, will do just that. His size, skill-set and football IQ combined should make him a force to be reckoned with in the Tigers' offense. And if Uzomah becomes a force, it will only bode well for a hungry team looking to bounce back after a dismal season.

"I am excited about where we are going as a team," Uzomah said. "We have made vast improvements this spring, so I am really amped up about this upcoming season."

and converted all 27 of his extra points. He should be in line for more work this fall due to Auburn's new offense.

To say Clark got his share of work a season ago would be an understatement. The senior punted 70 times for 2,783 yards, an average of 39.8 yards, and induced 37 fair catches.

Quan Bray, Trovon Reed, Corey Grant, Tre Mason and Joshua Holsey give the team options at punt and kick returner.

"We have our kicker and punter back so that gives us some stability," Malzahn said. "We need a returner to step up."

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Auburn begins by playing three winnable games at home against Washington State, Arkansas State — Malzahn's former team — and Mississippi State. So, a fast start is doable. Historically, if the Tigers knock off the Bulldogs early, it's a good sign.

Road games at LSU and Texas A&M, two *Lindy's* preseason Top 10 teams, will be challenging during the month of October, but the Tigers play Ole Miss, Western Carolina (Homecoming) and Florida Atlantic at home, and they could be close to bowl eligibility entering a daunting stretch in November.

Following road trips to Arkansas and Tennessee, teams that feature new head coaches and rebuilding rosters, Auburn concludes with rivals Georgia and Alabama, who beat the Tigers by a combined score of 87-0 last year.

— Matt Lowe

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	WASHINGTON STATE	3-9
Sept. 7	ARKANSAS STATE	10-3
Sept. 14	MISSISSIPPI STATE	8-5
Sept. 21	at LSU	10-3
Oct. 5	OLE MISS	7-6
Oct. 12	WESTERN CAROLINA	1-10
Oct. 19	at Texas A&M	11-2
Oct. 26	FAU	3-9
Nov. 2	at Arkansas	4-8
Nov. 9	at Tennessee	5-7
Nov. 16	GEORGIA	12-2
Nov. 30	ALABAMA	13-1

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brent Pease | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: D.J. Durkin** | **STADIUM: Ben Hill Griffin: 88,548**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
11-2 overall, 7-1 SEC (2nd, East)

COACH:
Will Muschamp — At Florida and overall: 18-8, 2 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
10; 5 offense, 4 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Jeff Driskel, RB Matt Jones, DL Dominique Easley, DE Dante Fowler Jr., DE/OLB Ronald Powell, LB Antonio Morrison, CB Marcus Roberson, CB/WR Loucheiz Purifoy

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Gators have a solid quarterback situation with Driskel and should have a potent running game again. The offensive line has been upgraded. Defensively, UF should be able to rush the passer well from both edges and consistently cover. Florida's punting and return game is impressive.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Florida continues its search for playmaking receivers and enters the season with barely any proven depth at the position. Unlike last year, the tight end position likely won't be able to pick up much of the slack. The interior of UF's defensive line is unproven and will need to hold up against the run. The safety spots are a concern and a reliable kicker must emerge.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Mike Gillislee, TE Jordan Reed, DT Sharrif Floyd, LB Jon Bostic, S Matt Elam, K Caleb Sturgis

OVERVIEW:
The Gators appear ready to contend for the SEC title after improving their win total by four in Muschamp's second season. The offense should be better with a seasoned Driskel running the show. Defensively, UF remains elite. An SEC East title is the bare minimum expectation for this squad. In his third season, it's time for Muschamp to compete for the league title in Atlanta.

Good Isn't Good Enough; Gators' Offense Must Improve

Florida coach Will Muschamp says it's a failure anytime the Gators don't win the SEC East and go to Atlanta.

He also says Florida won't be "back" until the Gators win a championship.

Entering his third season, it's time for Muschamp to deliver success and a title. Quarterback Jeff Driskel is his key.

In Muschamp's two seasons, the Gators have boasted stingy defenses. However, Florida has been subpar on offense.

UF managed to put together an 11-2 season last year, despite its offensive shortcomings. That was a tremendous improvement from Muschamp's first season, a forgettable 7-6 campaign.

Still, an offensive resurgence appears vital in order for UF to recapture the SEC East title and compete in the SEC Championship Game.

Last season, the Gators were 103rd nationally in total offense, 114th in passing and 76th in scoring.

The defensive-oriented Muschamp has a second-year offensive coordinator, Brent Pease, and a second-year starting quarterback in Driskel. He's hopeful the continuity will pay dividends this fall.

"I think we're going to have some natural improvements offensively because we're a year older, a year in the system," Muschamp said. "I think we're going to be better up front offensively. It starts there. I think we're going to be talented at the running back position. I think we'll be improved at the receiver position, and I think Jeff's going to be better."

He better be.

Driskel was an overall success in his first season as UF's starter, mainly because he avoided turnovers. The 6-4, 236-pounder threw only five interceptions in 245 attempts. However, he wasn't a reliable playmaker. Driskel threw just 12 touchdown passes and averaged a paltry 137.2 passing yards per game. He did provide a spark to UF's ground game, running for 413 yards and four scores.

Driskel enters his junior season in a completely different role. Last year, he competed with Jacoby Brissett for the starting job through the entire offseason and didn't win the role until after UF's first game.

Now, Driskel is the unquestioned leader of the offense. He has to become the elite player he was projected to be coming out of high school for the Gators to avoid another "failure." He has to guide the Gators to at least the SEC East crown.

"He has a lot of snaps under his belt and a lot of wins under his belt," Muschamp said. "We have a strong comfort level in Jeff and his ability to lead our football team."

OFFENSE

Jeff Driskel's improvement will largely depend on the progress of his supporting cast. The Gators are breaking several new players into prominent roles.

Driskel's health is also a concern. He has missed games the last two seasons because of injuries. With Jacoby Brissett having transferred to North Carolina State, there are no enviable options behind Driskel.

Backup Tyler Murphy is a junior who did not throw a pass last season. Murphy is a holdover from the Urban Meyer era and, weighing just 206 pounds, seems more suited to the spread. UF's other options are redshirt freshman Skyler Mornhinweg and true freshman Max Staver. UF will limit Driskel's designed runs this season to avoid a heavy amount of contact.

Dominique Easley
Photo by Kim Klement-US PRESSWIRE

The main factor in keeping heat off Driskel will be running back Matt Jones, a sophomore who dazzled coaches in spring practice. The 6-2, 226-pound Jones is replacing Mike Gillislee, who carried 244 times for 1,152 yards and 10 touchdowns as a senior last season.

While Jones seems a sure bet to produce, there is uncertainty regarding Florida's receivers. The Gators have one decent returning receiver in junior Quinton Dunbar, who caught 36 passes for 383 yards and four scores last season.

The returning production behind Dunbar is non-existent. No returning wide receiver caught more than three passes last year. Andre Debose was a massive disappointment, making three receptions as he struggled to learn Pease's offense. The former five-star recruit has reached now-or-never status as a senior.

Florida did sign an impressive group of freshmen receivers, led by early enrollee Demarcus Robinson.

Driskel also lost his security blanket in tight end Jordan Reed. As a junior, Reed led UF in catches (45) and yards (559) before leaving early for the NFL Draft. UF doesn't have a tight end as talented as Reed on its roster.

The line is an area of optimism. The Gators welcome back three starters in center Jon Harrison, right guard Jon Halapio and right tackle Chaz Green. D.J. Humphries is ready to man the left tackle position as a sophomore. Humphries, considered the best tackle in his class coming out of high school, played well as a true freshman.

The Gators also have two impact transfers ready to step in after sitting out last season. Tackle Tyler Moore started as a true freshman at Nebraska and could unseat Green at right tackle. Guard Max Garcia started at Maryland before coming to UF and has impressed coaches. Muschamp called Moore and Garcia "outstanding pickups" for UF following spring drills.

DEFENSE

When Muschamp arrived from Texas, Florida hoped it was getting a defensive guru. So far, so good. The Gators have ranked in the nation's top 10 in total defense in both of Muschamp's seasons in Gainesville.

Achieving that feat again would not be a surprise.

While several studs have moved on to the NFL, the Gators still have an impressive amount of talent.

The pass rush could be special. Two true sophomore defensive ends, Dante Fowler Jr. and Jonathan Bullard, showed tremendous promise last season. The Gators also welcome back Ronald Powell, who missed all of last season after tearing his ACL in UF's spring game. The redshirt junior plays

Jeff Driskel
Photo by Chuck Cook-USA TODAY Sports

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jeff Driskel*	Jr.	Has to become more of a playmaker.	Tyler Murphy, Jr.
RB	Matt Jones	So.	Will be expected to run for 1,000 yards.	Kelvin Taylor, Fr.
RB	Trey Burton	Sr.	Mr. Versatile has scored 19 career touchdowns.	Hunter Joyer, Jr.
WR	Quinton Dunbar*	Jr.	Led UF with four receiving scores last year.	Latroy Pittman, So.
WR	Demarcus Robinson	Fr.	A natural ready to make impact in first year.	Andre Debose, Sr.
TE	Clay Burton	Jr.	Not the pass catcher Jordan Reed was for UF.	Kent Taylor, So.
LT	D.J. Humphries	So.	Played well as a true freshman last season.	Tyler Moore, So.
LG	Max Garcia	Jr.	Maryland transfer has impressed coaches.	Ian Silberman, Jr.
C	Jonotthan Harrison*	Sr.	Has started 27 games for the Gators.	Kyle Koehne, Sr.
RG	Jon Halapio*	Sr.	Has logged 33 starts in his career.	Kyle Koehne, Sr.
RT	Tyler Moore	So.	Started at Nebraska prior to transfer.	Chaz Green, Jr.*
K	Brad Phillips	Sr.	Unlikely to make UF fans forget Caleb Sturgis.	Austin Hardin, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Ronald Powell	Jr.	Missed last season; led UF in sacks in 2011.	Dante Fowler Jr., So.
DT	Dominique Easley*	Sr.	Team leader in sacks a season ago.	Darious Cummings, Jr.
DT	Leon Orr	Jr.	Made 5.5 stops behind line last year in limited role.	Damien Jacobs, Sr.
DE	Dante Fowler Jr.	So.	Appears ready for breakthrough season.	Jonathan Bullard, So.
LB	Neiron Ball	Jr.	Quick defender with good rush skills.	Jeremi Powell, Fr.
LB	Antonio Morrison	So.	Coaches believe he's ready for All-SEC year.	Darrin Kitchens, Sr.
LB	Michael Taylor	Jr.	Reliable defender made 32 tackles last season.	Daniel McMillian, Fr.
CB	Marcus Roberson*	Jr.	Broke up 12 passes with two picks last year.	Brian Poole, So.
CB	Loucheiz Purifoy*	Jr.	Electric athlete who will also play at receiver.	Jaylen Watkins, Sr.
SS	Jabari Gorman	Jr.	The biggest unknown in UF's defense.	Valdez Showers, So.
FS	Jaylen Watkins*	Sr.	Picked off three passes last year at cornerback.	Cody Riggs, Jr.
P	Kyle Christy*	Jr.	Averaged school-record 45.8 yards a punt last year.	Todd Fennell, So.

*Returning Starter

GATORS RECRUITING 2013

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Daniel McMillian
After a rough start to spring practice, this four-star early enrollee started to find his footing near the end of spring ball and could push for a starting spot at middle linebacker entering this fall. He has size, speed and good instincts.

Demarcus Robinson
One of the biggest knocks on Florida's offense last year was a lack of playmakers at wide receiver. Robinson, an early enrollee who had some impressive moments this spring before suffering a foot injury, has the size Florida covets to go with a decent set of hands.

Vernon Hargreaves III
Because Florida returns perhaps one of the best cornerback trios in the nation in Louicheiz Purifoy, Marcus Roberson and Jaylen Watkins, there's not much chance that Hargreaves will make an impact as a freshman, but make no mistake about it, the potential is there for an All-American type of career from this lockdown cornerback.

THE SLEEPER

Marqui Hawkins
Because he fought through some injuries while playing in an offense in high school that primarily focused on running the ball, Columbus (Ga.) Carver wide out Marqui Hawkins isn't as highly rated as some of the other receivers signed by the Gators, but he has the size, speed and athleticism to play early at a position of need for Florida.

Committments	29
Average Stars	3.59
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	14
★★★☆☆	12
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	104
National Rank: 4	SEC: 2

2014 NEEDS: After signing classes that were pretty much balanced across the board the last two cycles, the Gators are in a position to recruit the best players available for the most part. However, there is definitely a need at quarterback and tight end. The commitment of Rivals100 quarterback Will Grier helps fill the void at signal caller. Tight end however is a different story entirely. While Florida is involved with several options, the Gators aren't in great shape with any of them (as of early April).

— by Mark Wheeler/InsideTheGators.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Alex Anzalone	LB	6-3	229	★★★★★	Wyomissing, PA	Wyomissing Area
Anzalone, the No. 28 rated prospect in the nation according to Rivals.com, switched his commitment from Notre Dame to Florida in early January. The early enrollee was injured during the first week of spring ball, but should be fine by fall camp.						
Alvin Bailey	WR	5-11	170	★★★★	Seffner, FL	Armwood
Bailey did a little bit of everything for his Armwood squad with 69 carries for 350-yards and 1 touchdown running. Was 19 of 56 for 226 yards, 3 touchdowns and 2 interceptions as a quarterback. Had 40 catches for 658 yards and 9 touchdowns receiving.						
Jaynard Bostwick	DT	6-4	291	★★★★	Port St. Lucie, FL	St. Lucie West Centennial
One of the biggest and best late additions to the class, Bostwick choose Florida over Miami and Alabama right before Signing Day. The No. 25 rated defensive tackle in the nation according to Rivals.com is reportedly over 315 pounds already.						
Caleb Brantley	DT	6-3	304	★★★★	Crescent City, FL	Crescent City
The No. 9 rated defensive tackle in the nation by Rivals.com, Brantley choose Florida over offers from programs such as Florida State, Alabama, Auburn, USC and others.						
Trenton Brown	OL	6-8	350	★★★	Milledgeville, GA	Georgia Military
The one time Georgia commitment spurned the Bulldogs for SEC East rival Florida. Brown is the No. 51 rated JUCO prospect by Rivals.com.						
Darious Cummings	DT	6-3	305	★★★★	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
A former member of the Florida State football squad, Cummings is the third East Mississippi C.C. player signed by Florida in the last two years.						
Jarrad Davis	LB	6-3	215	★★★	Kingsland, GA	Camden County
Davis, the No. 30 rated outside linebacker in the nation according to Rivals.com, pulled a late switcheroo, jumping from Auburn to Florida.						
Cameron Dillard	OL	6-3	285	★★★	Canton, MI	Canton
Ranked as the No. 23 guard in the nation by Rivals.com, Dillard is slotted to begin his Gators career at center. He was also the No. 12 rated player in Michigan.						
Ahmad Fulwood	WR	6-4	189	★★★★	Jacksonville, FL	Bishop Kenny
Suffering though multiple injuries playing on both sides of the ball during his senior season, Fulwood still showed enough potential to be ranked in the Rivals250.						
Vernon Hargreaves III	DB	5-11	185	★★★★★	Tampa, FL	Wharton
The No. 2 overall rated prospect in the nation on the Rivals100, Vargreaves III was rarely challenged by opposing quarterbacks at the high school level.						
Marcell Harris	DB	6-1	207	★★★★	Orlando, FL	Dr. Phillips
The No. 67 rated prospect in Rivals.com's Rivals100, Harris suffered a knee injury 3/4 of the way through his senior season.						
Marqui Hawkins	WR	6-2	190	★★★	Columbus, GA	Carver
The No. 31 rated prospect in the Peach State by Rivals.com, Hawkins' Carver squad finished 12-2 in what was an injury marred senior season for him.						
Joey Ivie	DE	6-4	270	★★★★	Dade City, FL	Pasco
Ivie, the No. 198 rated prospect in the nation on the Rivals250, helped lead his team to a 12-1 record by recording 12 sacks and 3 forced fumbles as a senior.						
Octavius Jackson	OL	6-4	285	★★★	Moultrie, GA	Colquitt County
Jackson, the No. 76 rated prospect in the state of Georgia according to Rivals.com, has the ability to play guard or tackle on the next level.						
Roderick Johnson	OL	6-6	315	★★★	Delray Beach, FL	American Heritage School
The No. 30 rated offensive tackle in the nation, the No. 59 rated prospect in the state of Florida by Rivals.com, Johnson could possibly start off as a guard in college after struggling with speed rushers during his two postseason all-star game appearances.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Adam Lane	RB	5-8	216	★★★	Winter Haven, FL	Winter Haven
After having his junior season cut short by injury, Lane returned to form as a senior, rushing for 1,485 yards on 185 rushes (8.0 avg) with 11 touchdowns.						
Daniel McMillian	LB	6-3	220	★★★★	Jacksonville, FL	First Coast
The No. 5 rated inside linebacker in the nation by Rivals.com, McMillian finished his senior season with 5 interceptions before enrolling early at Florida where he is already competing for a starting job.						
Keanu Neal	DB	6-1	203	★★★★	Bushnell, FL	South Sumter
Neal, the No. 7 rated safety and the No. 64 overall prospect in the nation by Rivals.com, finished his senior season with 30 solo tackles, 50 assists, 2 interceptions, 3 tackles for loss and 2 sacks.						
Jarran Reed	DT	6-4	305	★★★	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
A one-time commitment to both North Carolina and Ole Miss, Reed finally settled on Gainesville where he will be joined along the defensive line by former teammate Damien Jacobs.						
Antonio Riles	DE	6-4	262	★★★	Lawrenceville, GA	Archer
Though he had offers from the likes of Alabama, Georgia and Michigan State, Riles, who is the No. 23 rated strongside defensive end in the nation, choose Florida early on and stuck with his commitment.						
Demarcus Robinson	WR	6-2	200	★★★★	Fort Valley, GA	Peach County
Rated as the No. 52 prospect overall in the nation according to Rivals.com, Robinson flip flopped back and forth between Florida and Clemson as Signing Day appraoched, before finally selecting and signing with the Gators.						
Matt Rolin	LB	6-4	209	★★★★	Ashburn, VA	Briar Woods
A late flip from SEC East rival South Carolina, Rolin is the No. 22 rated outside linebacker in the nation according to Rivals.com. He is the No. 12 rated prospect in the state of Virginia.						
Jordan Sherit	DE	6-5	234	★★★★	Tampa, FL	Hillsborough
His senior season cut short by an ACL injury, the No. 9 rated weakside defensive end in the nation according to Rivals.com still approached double digit sacks on the season.						
Max Staver	QB	6-5	235	★★★	Brentwood, TN	Brentwood Academy
The No. 22 rated player in the state of Tennessee by Rivals.com, Staver finished his senior season 131-of-180 passing for 1,916-yards and 8 touchdowns.						
Kelvin Taylor	RB	5-11	216	★★★★	Belle Glade, FL	Glades Day
Taylor, the No. 6 rated back in the nation according to Rivals.com — the No. 38 prospect overall — carried the ball 237 times for 2,423-yards and 41 touchdowns as a senior.						
Chris Thompson	WR	6-0	170	★★★	Gainesville, FL	Gainesville
The No. 93 rated receiver in the nation by Rivals.com, Thompson committed to Florida after earning an offer at the Gators prestigous Friday Night Lights Camp in July.						
Johnny Townsend	K	6-2	200	★★	Orlando, FL	Boone
The No. 14 ranked kicker in the nation by Rivals.com, Townsend was recruited to Florida to be a punter. He flipped from Ohio State to UF on Signing Day.						
Nick Washington	DB	6-0	183	★★★★	Jacksonville, FL	Trinity Christian
The No. 14 rated safety in the nation by Rivals.com, Washington was one of Florida's first commits in the Class of 2013. He never waivered or took any other official visits.						
Trevon Young	OL	6-5	274	★★★	Bradenton, FL	Braden River
A post Signing Day addition to the the class, he was headed to play Division II basketball at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg before Florida extended a late offer.						

GATORS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
53	Cody Adams	LB	6-0	231	So.	Ocala
25	Gideon Ajagbe	LB	6-3	243	Jr.	Coconut Grove
86	Raphael Andrades	WR	6-0	190	So.	Tallahassee
34	Alex Anzalone	LB	6-3	230	Fr.	Wyomissing, PA
11	Neiron Ball	LB	6-3	235	Jr.	Jackson, GA
31	Jacob Brandenburg	WR	6-2	191	Fr.	Gulfport
8	Jeremy Brown	DB	5-10	185	Sr.	Orlando
33	Mack Brown	RB	5-11	213	Jr.	Lithonia, GA
90	Jonathan Bullard	DL	6-3	265	So.	Shelby, NC
88	Clay Burton	TE	6-4	253	Jr.	Venice
8	Trey Burton	RB	6-0	225	Sr.	Venice
36	David Campbell	LB	5-11	219	Sr.	Live Oak
4	Kyle Christy	P	6-3	193	Jr.	Brownsburg, IN
30	Tim Clark	DB	5-10	194	Sr.	Wellborn
94	Bryan Cox, Jr.	DL	6-3	260	Fr.	Ft. Lauderdale
43	Kyle Crofoot	LS	6-3	206	So.	Windemere
55	Darious Cummings	DL	6-1	309	Jr.	Titusville
4	Andre Debose	WR	5-11	189	Sr.	Sanford
82	Bair Diamond	TE	6-4	224	Fr.	Fort Myers
6	Jeff Driskel	QB	6-4	236	Jr.	Oviedo
1	Quinton Dunbar	WR	6-1	195	Jr.	Miami
74	Jessamen Dunker	OL	6-4	300	Fr.	Boynton Beach
2	Dominique Easley	DL	6-2	283	Sr.	Staten Island, NY
39	Todd Fennell	P	6-1	179	So.	Vero Beach
46	Drew Ferris	LS	6-1	212	Jr.	Carlsbad, CA
6	Dante Fowler, Jr.	BUCK	6-3	263	So.	St. Petersburg
79	Matthew Fuchs	OL	6-2	238	Fr.	Gainesville
76	Max Garcia	OL	6-4	307	Jr.	Norcross, GA
21	Jabari Gorman	DB	5-10	186	Jr.	Miami
75	Chaz Green	OL	6-5	304	Jr.	Tampa
9	Jacob Guy	QB	6-5	210	Fr.	Dade City
67	Jon Halapio	OL	6-3	315	Sr.	St. Petersburg
16	Austin Hardin	K	5-10	205	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
72	Jonotthan Harrison	OL	6-3	302	Sr.	Groveland
37	Mark Herndon	RB	5-9	193	So.	Ocala
70	D.J. Humphries	OL	6-5	280	So.	Union, NC
91	Joey Ivie	DL	6-4	269	Fr.	Dade City
4	Damien Jacobs	DL	6-3	286	Sr.	Gibson, LA
24	Matt Jones	RB	6-2	226	So.	Seffner
41	Hunter Joyer	RB	5-10	235	Jr.	Wesley Chapel
49	Darrin Kitchens	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Homestead
47	Tim Kline	DB	6-0	197	Fr.	Neptune Beach
64	Kyle Koehne	OL	6-5	315	Sr.	Indianapolis, IN
29	Rhaheim Ledbetter	DB	5-9	207	Fr.	Shelby, NC
33	Chris Maignan	WR	6-0	184	Sr.	Miami
81	Darius Masline	WR	5-8	175	Fr.	Jacksonville
20	Marcus Maye	DB	6-0	200	Fr.	Melbourne
95	Alex McCalister	DL	6-5	238	Fr.	Clemmons, NC
19	Ryan McGriff	QB	6-0	200	So.	Gainesville
13	Daniel McMillian	LB	6-1	227	Fr.	Jacksonville
30	Michael McNeely	WR	5-8	177	Jr.	Clearwater
22	Hugh Miles	DB	5-8	195	So.	Miami
87	A.J. Mobley	WR	5-11	222	Jr.	Fayetteville, GA
73	Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	312	So.	Clearwater
17	Skyler Mornhinweg	QB	6-2	208	Fr.	Philadelphia, PA
12	Antonio Morrison	LB	6-1	229	So.	Bolingbrook, IL
10	Tyler Murphy	QB	6-2	206	Jr.	Wethersfield, CT
38	Samuel Nowakowski	LB	5-9	195	Fr.	Valrico
44	Leon Orr	DL	6-5	310	Jr.	New Port Richey
15	Ryan Parrish	WR	6-2	208	Jr.	Lakeland
83	Solomon Patton	WR	5-9	171	Sr.	Mobile, AL
27	Ben Peacock	DB	5-8	169	So.	Bradenton
97	Brad Phillips	K	5-10	191	Sr.	Gainesville
13	Latroy Pittman	WR	6-0	208	So.	Citra
24	Brian Poole	DB	5-10	203	So.	Bradenton
28	Jeremi Powell	LB	6-1	205	Fr.	Largo
7	Ronald Powell	BUCK	6-4	234	Jr.	Moreno Valley, CA
13	Christian Provancha	WR	6-6	220	Jr.	Cocoa
15	Loucheiz Purifoy	DB/WR	6-1	185	Jr.	Pensacola
31	Cody Riggs	DB	5-9	184	Jr.	Ft. Lauderdale
5	Marcus Roberson	DB	6-0	195	Jr.	Ft. Lauderdale
11	Demarcus Robinson	WR	6-2	201	Fr.	Fort Valley, GA
9	Matt Rolin	LB	6-4	208	Fr.	Ashburn, VA
21	Evan Schroeder	DB	6-0	185	So.	New Smyrna Beach
10	Valdez Showers	DB	5-11	190	So.	Madison Heights, MI
77	Ian Silberman	OL	6-5	291	Jr.	Orange Park
45	Braxton Skinner	WR	6-4	221	Sr.	Jacksonville
48	Vincent Smith	WR	5-11	183	Fr.	Merritt Island
21	Kelvin Taylor	RB	5-11	215	Fr.	Belle Glade
18	Kent Taylor	TE	6-5	224	So.	Land O'Lakes
51	Michael Taylor	LB	6-0	231	Jr.	Atlanta, GA
84	Colin Thompson	TE	6-3	252	Fr.	Warminster, PA
63	Trip Thurman	OL	6-5	313	So.	Dover, DE
42	Grant Van Aman	P	6-2	188	Fr.	Tampa
95	Francisco Velez	K	5-9	180	Jr.	Ocala
40	Justin Vogel	P	6-4	211	Fr.	Tampa
14	Jaylen Watkins	DB	6-0	181	Sr.	Cape Coral
87	Tevin Westbrook	TE	6-5	262	Jr.	Coconut Creek
98	Quinteze Williams	OL	6-4	280	Fr.	Tyrone, GA
57	Dakota Wilson	DL	5-11	245	So.	Bradenton

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Driskel	12	132.19	156	245	5	63.7	1646	12	75	137.2
J. Brissett	5	134.90	23	35	0	65.7	249	1	39	49.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Reed	13	45	559	12.4	3	39	43.0
Q. Dunbar	13	36	383	10.6	4	26	29.5
O. Hines	13	23	242	10.5	0	52	18.6

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Gillislee	13	244	1187	35	1152	4.7	10	46	88.6
J. Driskel	12	118	716	303	413	3.5	4	70	34.4
M. Jones	12	52	281	6	275	5.3	3	32	22.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Evans 83, M. Elam 76, J. Bostic 68
Tackles for loss: S. Floyd 13, M. Elam 11, D. Easley 8.5
Sacks: D. Easley 4, J. Bostic 3, S. Floyd 3, L. McCray 3
Interceptions: M. Elam 4, J. Evans 3, Ja. Watkins 3

NOTEBOOK

Florida was forced to go away from its usual spring game format because of a depleted offensive line. The Gators were down to six healthy offensive linemen by the end of spring drills.

Two starters from last season, guard **Jon Halapio** and tackle **Chaz Green**, underwent minor offseason surgery and were unavailable. Reserves **Ian Silberman** and **Trip Thurman** were out with shoulder injuries. The four offensive linemen UF signed in the 2013 class won't report until summer.

UF conducted 15 separate periods on April 6, with limited scrimmage time mixed in. Coach **Will Muschamp** capped the scrimmage work to roughly 12 consecutive snaps for about 60 total snaps.

"It's the best we could do given the circumstances," Muschamp said. "Would I have liked to line up and had a live game and had 120 snaps? Sure, that would have been good."

Muschamp isn't worried about the line for the fall. The injured veterans will be cleared by the start of camp.

"We feel like right now on our offensive line we have eight guys that can play major college football at a high level and that we can win with," Muschamp said. "That's good depth."

• Muschamp didn't look beyond the SEC to round out his coaching staff. He hired former Kentucky head coach **Joker Phillips** to take over as receivers coach. Phillips played receiver with the Wildcats and also coached the position prior to serving as UK's offensive coordinator and head coach. Graduate assistant **Bush Hamden** coached Florida's receivers last season after Aubrey Hill suddenly resigned the day before August camp opened.

When defensive coordinator Dan Quinn left for the Seahawks, Muschamp again chose a coach from the SEC. He promoted linebacker coach **D.J. Durkin** to coordinator and then hired **Brad Lawing** away from South Carolina to coach the defensive line.

Lawing had coached at South Carolina for 17 seasons in two stints.

• Defensive line coach **Bryant Young** resigned from the team April 10, saying he wanted to spend more time with his family. Young, the father of six and a former NFL All-Pro defensive tackle with the San Francisco 49ers, spent the past two seasons with Florida.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

On this season: "If they can develop a passing attack, they can be in SEC East race. They could probably still be there because I don't think the East is very good. Florida is really, really good and talented on defense. They lose some interior people but I'm sure they've got interior people to replace them with. Florida hung its hat on defense and running the football last year. They actually had a better year than I thought because I didn't think their offense was very good. It showed up in the (Sugar) bowl because their offense couldn't move on Louisville."

On QB Jeff Driskel: "I thought their receivers were horrible last year and I couldn't figure out what they were trying to do. He's got a good arm and the ball comes out with authority. I don't know if he's not a good passer or the lack of receivers hurt him."

Loucheiz Purifoy
Photo by AP Photo/Butch Dill

the Buck position, a hybrid of outside linebacker and defensive end. The Buck is Florida's premier pass-rushing spot. Powell led Florida in sacks in the 2011 season with six.

Dominique Easley, another proven pass rusher, will likely begin the season at tackle after playing end last year. Easley, a senior, registered four sacks a season ago to lead the Gators.

Easley's move inside was necessary as Muschamp tries to rebuild the interior of the line and get the best 11 defenders on the field. Standout tackle Sharrif Floyd left early for the NFL, while Omar Hunter graduated. The Gators need interior linemen Leon Orr and Damien Jacobs to step up.

The linebacking corps is also undergoing a major change after losing Jon Bostic and Jelani Jenkins.

Bostic's replacement has coaches giddy. Sophomore Antonio Morrison is expected to become an instant force in the middle. He demonstrated his ability last season by delivering a huge hit on Florida State quarterback E.J. Manuel in last season's 37-26 win over the Seminoles. Manuel fumbled on the play, and UF recovered as the Gators rallied in the fourth quarter to win.

"I think he'll be as good of a linebacker in our league as any next year," Muschamp said. "He's got great instincts. He's a violent player."

The rest of the unit consists of solid, but as of yet unspectacular, players in Neiron Ball, Michael Taylor and Darrin Kitchens.

Florida boasts a talented trio of cornerbacks in Marcus Roberson, Loucheiz Purifoy and Jaylen Watkins. Brian Poole also excited the staff last season as a true freshman.

Muschamp remained concerned about the safeties coming out of spring practice as UF tries to replace standout Matt Elam and steady Josh Evans. He has already moved cornerback Cody Riggs to safety and has said that Watkins could play there as well. Jabari Gorman, Marcus Maye and Valdez Showers must play with more consistency, or else some impressive true freshmen could see early playing time.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Caleb Sturgis, a two-time finalist for the Lou Groza Award, graduated after setting the school record in made field goals.

Brad Phillips and Austin Hardin battled through spring without either claiming the job. Phillips, a senior, has made two field goals in his career.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Jeff Driskel

The one player the Gators simply can't afford to lose. ... The 6-4, 236-pound Driskel is a true dual-threat quarterback who has outstanding quickness and mobility for his size. ... As a sophomore, Driskel threw for 1,646 yards with 12 touchdowns and five interceptions last season. He also ran for 716 yards not counting sacks (413 net) and four more scores. ... Enters the season as the unquestioned starter after battling with Jacoby Brissett through all of last offseason. ... Wasn't named the starter until after the opening game.

EMERGING STAR

LB Antonio Morrison

Coach Will Muschamp describes Morrison as a "violent" player. ... The sophomore is relatively light (229 pounds) for a middle linebacker but delivers quite a hit. ... As a true freshman, he recorded the biggest blow of the season when he knocked out Florida State quarterback E.J. Manuel and forced a fumble that UF recovered to spark the Gators to a 37-26 comeback win in Tallahassee. ... Made 34 tackles with two behind the line and a sack last season. ... Muschamp believes Morrison will be an All-SEC player this season.

TOP NEWCOMER

RT Tyler Moore

The 6-6, 312-pound Moore will make an immediate impact as a sophomore and could unseat Chaz Green for the starting right tackle spot. ... Moore transferred to UF after leaving Nebraska after his freshman season. ... He started four games at right tackle in the 2011 season as a true freshman for the Cornhuskers and played in nine games. ... Rivals.com listed Moore as a four-star recruit and the nation's 67th-best overall prospect when he came out of Clearwater (Fla.) Countryside.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.9	43
Rushing	166.5	44
Passing	184.3	88
Total	350.9	82
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.3	29
Rushing	130.6	31
Passing	175.9	12
Total	306.5	9
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.15	47

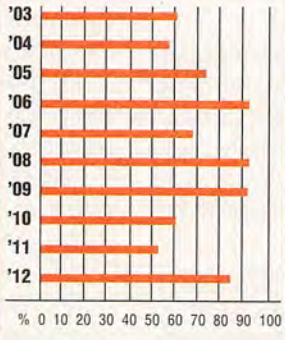
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.5	71
Rushing	143.0	73
Passing	185.7	89
Total	328.7	105
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	20.3	20
Rushing	132.7	40
Passing	166.9	7
Total	299.5	8
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 12	- 0.92	113

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.5	76
Rushing	188.1	39
Passing	146.3	114
Total	334.4	103
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	14.5	5
Rushing	94.9	4
Pass	192.5	17
Total	287.4	5
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 15	+ 1.15	7

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

11-2, 7-1

W	BOWLING GREEN	27-14
W	at Texas A&M	20-17
W	at Tennessee	37-20
W	KENTUCKY	38-0
W	LSU	14-6
W	at Vanderbilt	31-17
W	SOUTH CAROLINA	44-11
L	vs. Georgia (Jacksonville)	9-17
W	MISSOURI	14-7
W	LOUISIANA	27-20
W	JACKSONVILLE STATE	23-0
W	at Florida State	37-26
	Sugar Bowl	
L	vs. Louisville	23-33

PLAYER PROFILE

Matt Jones
Photo by Kevin Liles-USA TODAY Sports

Jones Springs Into Prominent Position

Running back Matt Jones has arguably the biggest assignment of any player for Florida.

The sophomore has to fill the production void left by Mike Gillislee, who ran for 1,152 yards and 10 touchdowns last season. Gillislee became the first Florida running back to hit the 1,000-yard mark since Ciatrick Fason in 2004.

History isn't on Jones' side. UF has never had a running back gain 1,000 yards in consecutive seasons. Gators legend Emmitt Smith ran for more than 1,000 yards as a freshman and junior, but didn't reach the total as a sophomore. The school's all-time leading rusher, Errict Rhett, ran for more than 1,000 yards his sophomore and senior years.

History might be the only thing going against Jones, though. He quickly distanced himself as the team's starter in spring practice, which was no easy task with blue-chip recruit Kelvin Taylor enrolling early. Taylor is the son of former Jacksonville Jaguars and UF great running back Fred Taylor.

"Matt is a physical runner," Florida coach Will Muschamp said. "He understands our protection. He's got great hands in the throwing game. There's no question he is an all-around back. He can do everything for us, and he's shown it to us for 14 straight practices."

Jones showed his ability as a true freshman last season. In Florida's comeback win over Florida State in Tallahassee, Jones carried eight times for 81 yards. He broke a 32-yard touchdown run to give UF a 37-20 lead with 2:33 to play.

For the season, Jones rushed 52 times for 275 yards and three scores, becoming at ease in offensive coordinator Brent Pease's system.

"I'm very comfortable," Jones said. "I feel like I know everything. I think I understand the concepts of the game and everything."

Jones had such a strong spring, he wasn't asked to do much in UF's final practice. The Gators didn't hold a traditional spring game because of a depleted offensive line.

Jones only carried one time for eight yards in the scrimmage portion. That was exactly how Muschamp wanted it.

"Matt's had a really outstanding spring," Muschamp said. "We have a good comfort level of where he is as a player."

Jones said that, despite the coaches trying to protect him, he can't allow his stronghold on the starting job to distract him.

"They kind of took it easy on me," Jones said. "I still can't fall off right now. I still have to keep on going and keep on being humble."

Hardin is a redshirt freshman.

UF doesn't have to worry about its punter. Kyle Christy is back after a tremendous sophomore season in which he averaged a school-record 45.8 yards per punt. Christy, a finalist for the Ray Guy Award, put 27 of his 66 punts inside the opponent's 20-yard line.

Florida has a dangerous return game, led by senior Andre Debose, who has returned an SEC-record four kickoffs for touchdowns in his career. Marcus Roberson emerged as a dynamic punt returner late last season.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The schedule is more inviting for the Gators this season, although still challenging.

Florida doesn't have to face SEC West heavyweights Alabama or Texas A&M. The Aggies drop off the schedule as UF picks up a home date against a rebuilding Arkansas squad.

The Gators will learn a great deal about themselves when they travel to Miami in Week 2. The schools haven't played since the 2008 season.

UF must travel to LSU and South Carolina. The Gators also will play their first ever road game at Missouri.

The bye weeks are set up well, coming before pivotal SEC East matchups with Tennessee and Georgia.

The Gators will welcome Florida State to Gainesville to conclude the regular season.

— Hays Carlyon

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	TOLEDO	9-4
Sept. 7	at Miami	7-5
Sept. 21	TENNESSEE	5-7
Sept. 28	at Kentucky	2-10
Oct. 5	ARKANSAS	4-8
Oct. 12	at LSU	10-3
Oct. 19	at Missouri	5-7
Nov. 2	vs. Georgia (Jacksonville)	12-2
Nov. 9	VANDERBILT	9-4
Nov. 16	at South Carolina	11-2
Nov. 23	GEORGIA SOUTHERN	10-3
Nov. 30	FLORIDA STATE	12-2

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Illinois-10 W Mich	24-7	W
WashSt +12½ BYU	6-30	L
Ohio +6½ Penn St	24-14	W
WEEK TWO: 5-2		
Utah St +7 Utah	27-20	W
Ariz +11 Okla St	16-14	W
Cowboys +3½ Giants	24-17	W
Titans +6 Pats	13-34	L
Jets -3 Bills	48-28	W
Cards +3 S'hawks	20-16	W
Raidrs -1 Chargrs	14-22	L
WEEK THREE: 5-1		
Navy +7 Penn St	7-34	L
Colts +3 Vikings	23-20	W
NotreD +6 Mich St	20-3	W
Rams +3½ R'skins	31-28	W
49ers -7 Lions	27-19	W
Falcs -3 Broncs	27-21	W
WEEK FOUR: 4-2		
Notre D -6 Mich	13-6	W
Syracuse -1 Minn	10-17	L
Colts -3 Jags	17-22	L
Cards +3½ Eagles	27-6	W
Pats +2 Ravens	30-31	W
S'hawks +3½ Pack	14-12	W

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GEORGIA BULLDOGS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Bobo | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Todd Grantham** | **STADIUM: Sanford Stadium 92,746**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
12-2, 7-1 SEC (1st, East)

COACH:
Mark Richt — At Georgia and overall: 118-40, 12 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 10 offense, 3 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Aaron Murray, RB Todd Gurley, RB Keith Marshall, WR Malcolm Mitchell, LB Amarlo Herrera, LB Jordan Jenkins, CB Damian Swann

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The offense is among the best in college football with Murray's passing, Gurley's power running, Marshall's explosiveness and Mitchell's playmaking ability. The offensive line is experienced and deep. Jenkins, Herrera and Swann stabilize an inexperienced defense

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The inexperienced defense. Communication and pre-snap adjustments could be problematic. While some new starters have been in the system, there could be as many as five newcomers on the field at one time. Offensive coordinators will exploit that.

KEY LOSSES:
DE Cornelius Washington, NT Jon Jenkins, NT Kwame Geathers, LB Jarvis Jones, LB Alec Ogletree, S Shawn Williams, S Baccari Rambo, CB Sanders Commings

OVERVIEW:
While it's tough to replace so much NFL talent on defense, the unit's overall production was surprisingly average. So if this new defense can just hold its own, the offense will give the Dawgs a chance to win any game — even a potential rematch with Alabama for the SEC championship. The first two games against Clemson and South Carolina will set the tone for the season.

Patience Pays Off With Return to Power

It seems like ages ago that Georgia was coming off its first losing season of the millennium and much of Bulldog Nation wanted to impeach head coach Mark Richt. In reality, it was only two years ago.

Now, the freshest image of Georgia football is that of being one play away from beating Alabama and competing in the BCS Championship Game against Notre Dame.

As a devout Christian, Richt certainly believes in miracles. And that faith gave him peace through the storm. But Richt knows this revival was sparked by something more human. A faith in each other.

"We kept coaching and encouraging and teaching," Richt said. "One of the things I wanted to make sure of was, through the tough times and all the negativity, that our players, when they came into our building, that we were going to provide the most positive atmosphere possible.

"I think the players appreciated that we didn't start brow-beating them, didn't start blaming them. We could show America, show Bulldog Nation anyway, how you handle adversity. What do you do when adversity strikes? Well, you stay positive, stay together, keep working hard. And trust."

That trust has been rewarded. Since that 6-7 aberration in 2010, the Bulldogs improved to 10-4 in 2011 and 12-2 last season. That trust is why Richt is confident the Bulldogs will not necessarily fall back despite having to almost completely rebuild the defense. Richt often notes that the offense faced a similar rebuilding challenge last year, then became one of the most potent units in the country.

"I think we've got a good talent base. I believe in our coaches and in our schemes. We've got a challenge of finding new guys who are ready to play SEC football at a high level," Richt said.

"But we've recruited well over the years. We've got a bunch of guys who are hungry for their opportunity to play and to start. It's going to be fun and interesting to see how we come out of it."

Several positions will remain up for grabs in August. But what Richt is most interested in seeing develop is the leadership and chemistry.

"We want a player driven team," Richt said.

"I'd rather guide these guys than have to stick my foot in the wrong place. ... I think we have a chance to be a really good team, but there's a lot of good teams out there. Who's going to play together?"

OFFENSE

Having one of the best quarterback/running back/receiver combinations in college football certainly helps.

Just what does an offense that set school records for points and yards do for an encore? In Georgia's case, it might just get even better. Keep in mind the Dawgs put up 529 points and 6,547 yards with a rebuilt line, two freshman running backs — one of whom was less than 100 percent most of the year — two inexperienced tight ends, and their best receiver lost in the fifth game to a knee injury.

Virtually the entire offense is back — and deeper than before. The only full-time starter lost was receiver Tavarres King. His loss will be offset by the return of Michael Bennett, the emergence of Chris Conley, the continued development of Justin Scott-Wesley, and Malcolm Mitchell's full-time

Todd Gurley
Photo by RD Moore

commitment to offense. Rhett McGowan earned the coaches' trust. Rantavious Wooten will have the opportunity to play, or a freshman could provide depth.

The keys to the offense, though, are quarterback Aaron Murray and the tailback tandem of Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall. Murray already has the school record for touchdown passes with 95. With 10,091 passing yards, he needs just 1,438 to break David Greene's school and SEC record of 11,528. That's especially impressive considering the Bulldogs actually ran the ball more times (525, not counting sacks) than they threw it (399).

In fact, the running game was a big reason the Dawgs returned to national prominence. Georgia fans consider it almost sacrilege to compare anyone to Herschel Walker. But Gurley's numbers certainly measure up. He finished with 1,385 yards — second best in school history for a freshman behind ... well, you know. He actually set the school freshman record with 17 rushing touchdowns, and his average of 6.2 yards per carry was better than Herschel's 5.9.

Of course, Gurley had plenty of help from Marshall, the other standout freshman. Despite a nagging hamstring strain, Marshall added 759 yards and eight touchdowns. So the tandem of "Gurshall," as they became known, produced 2,144 yards and 25 touchdowns and caught 27 passes for 208 yards. Both can run between the tackles or break it outside.

If there's any concern about the offense, it's the line. The Dawgs gave up 27 sacks and struggled at times to win the battle up front in short yardage situations. Everyone is back, but that doesn't mean the line is settled.

Xzavier Ward had a strong spring to push for the right tackle job. That would push John Theus to left tackle, and Kenarious Gates to left guard. Dallas Lee, the starting left guard last year, will have to fight to keep his job. Center David Andrews and right guard Chris Burnette are pretty secure.

DEFENSE

Graduation and early departures to the NFL hit the defense hard, and spring practice did little to sort out the two-deep rotation. The good news, though, is at least now they have a two-deep. Last year, starters played almost all of the snaps. This year, there's healthy competition at just about every position.

Only four players seem to be firmly entrenched as starters. And they are spread out with end Garrison Smith, outside linebacker Jordan Jenkins, inside linebacker Amarlo Herrera and

Malcolm Mitchell
Photo by Daniel Shirey-USA TODAY Sports

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Aaron Murray*	Sr.	Will finish with virtually every school passing record.	Hutson Mason, Jr.
RB	Todd Gurley*	So.	Physical runner who has burst to hit the corner.	Keith Marshall, So.
FB	Merritt Hall*	So.	Former walk-on is a punishing blocker.	Quayvon Hicks, So.
WR	Malcolm Mitchell*	Jr.	Recovering from torn meniscus in spring.	Rantavious Wooten, Sr.
WR	Chris Conley	Jr.	Ready to becoming a top receiver.	Michael Bennett, Jr.
TE	Artie Lynch*	Sr.	Strong blocker became reliable target.	Jay Rome, So.
LT	John Theus*	So.	Started at RT last year, still improving.	Mark Beard, Jr.
LG	Kenarious Gates*	Sr.	Started at LT last year but better inside.	Dallas Lee, Sr.*
C	David Andrews*	Jr.	Dependable in making the right calls.	Hunter Long, So.
RG	Chris Burnette*	Sr.	Steady veteran and quiet leader.	Austin Long, Sr.
RT	Xzavier Ward	So.	Has overcome injuries, starting to improve.	Watts Dantzler, Jr.
PK	Marshall Morgan*	So.	Needs to improve reliability, but has strong leg.	Patrick Beless, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Sterling Bailey	So.	Injury-plagued so far, but had good spring.	Ray Drew, Jr.
NT	Mike Thornton	Jr.	Brings quickness to middle of D-line.	Chris Mayes, So.
DE	Garrison Smith*	Sr.	Emerged last season as a leader.	John Taylor, Fr.
LB	Jordan Jenkins	So.	Had five sacks as true freshman; plays full speed.	T.J. Stripling, Sr.
LB	Amarlo Herrera*	Jr.	Already solid, could become spectacular.	Ryne Rankin, Fr.
LB	Ramik Wilson	Jr.	Moved inside to add experience in middle.	Reggie Carter, Fr.
LB	James DeLoach	So.	Had a breakthrough spring practice.	Chase Vasser, Sr.
CB	Damian Swann*	Jr.	A ball hawk who keeps getting better.	Shaq Wiggins, Fr.
CB	Sheldon Dawson	So.	Another who could have breakthrough season.	Reggie Wilkerson, Fr.
SS	Josh Harvey-Clemons	So.	Has moved around, also plays "Star."	Corey Moore, Jr.
FS	Tray Matthews	Fr.	Made big first impression in spring.	Connor Norman, Sr.
P	Collin Barber*	So.	Very consistent; needs to add distance.	Adam Erickson, Jr.

*Returning Starter

BULLDOGS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Tray Matthews
Georgia came into the 2013 class with a big need at safety and signed one of the best in the county in Matthews. He enrolled at Georgia in January, and was the starting free safety in the Bulldogs spring scrimmage in April. It looks as if he will start from day one.

Tim Kimbrough
The Bulldogs reached into Indiana to find a run stuffing linebacker in Kimbrough, and the U.S. Army All-American will have a chance to earn early playing time. Kimbrough is a perfect fit in the 3-4 defense because he is a downhill thumper that knocks ball carriers back.

Brandon Kublanow
Kublanow gained a reputation as one of the strongest and most intense interior linemen in the country. He will get looks at both guard and center in Athens, and he might have time to develop as the Bulldogs bring back every offensive lineman that played a snap in 2012.

THE SLEEPER

Shaquille Fluker
Rated as the No. 22 JC prospect in the nation by Rivals.com. At 6-1, 205 pounds, he has 4.5-speed and a nose for the ball, as he managed 31 tackles with five interceptions and four pass breakups last season.

Committments	33
Average Stars	3.48
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	16
★★★☆☆	17
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	115
National Rank: 12	SEC: 7

2014 NEEDS: Georgia has major needs on both lines of scrimmage. On offense, the biggest need is offensive tackle were the Bulldogs could look to bring in as many as three targets. On defense, the big need is on the interior as Georgia will be in the market for a nose tackle and multiple prospects that can play a three-technique. Running back will also be a position of emphasis, as Georgia will want to sign at least two game changers at the position.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
John Atkins	DT	6-4	310	★★★★	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy
Originally from Thomson, Georgia and enrolled at UGA in January. Was an Under Armour All-American in 2012 as an offensive lineman.						
Davin Bellamy	DE	6-5	240	★★★	Chamblee, GA	Chamblee
Rated as the No. 25 weakside defensive end in the nation and the 39th overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Paris Bostick	DB	6-1	208	★★★	Tampa, FL	Plant
Named MVP of Georgia's Dawg Night camp in summer of 2012. Rated as No. 41 safety prospect in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Auiden Bynum	OL	6-5	260	★★★	Valdosta, GA	Valwood
Helped Valwood to its first state championship in 2012. Enrolled at Georgia in January. Rated as the No. 40 offensive tackle in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Josh Cardiello	OL	6-3	280	★★★	Buford, GA	Buford
Enrolled at Georgia in January and led Buford to a state championship in 2012. Rated as the No. 25 offensive guard in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Reginald Carter	LB	6-1	224	★★★★	Snellville, GA	South Gwinnett
Recorded 145 tackles and 11 sacks in 2012. Rated as the No. 14 inside linebacker in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Jordan Davis	TE	6-4	225	★★★	Thomson, GA	Thomson
A Georgia state finalist in the 110-meter hurdles in 2012. Chose Georgia over offers from Florida and South Carolina.						
Reggie Davis	WR	6-0	159	★★★★	Tallahassee, FL	Lincoln
A Rivals250 selection and rated as the No. 30 wide receiver in the nation by Rivals.com Also the No. 37 ranked player in Florida.						
Brendan Douglas	RB	6-0	217	★★★	Augusta, GA	Aquinas
Rated as the No. 5 fullback in the nation by Rivals.com. Runs the 40-yard dash in below 4.5 seconds and has a 36-inch vertical leap.						
Leonard Floyd	DE	6-4	220	★★★★	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy
Originally from Eastman, Georgia and signed with the Bulldogs in 2012 as a Rivals250 selection. Will join the UGA team in June.						
Shaquille Fluker	DB	6-1	205	★★★	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
Rated as the No. 22 JC prospect in the nation by Rivals.com. Totaled nine interceptions in his two-years at the JC level.						
J.J. Green	ATH	5-9	186	★★★	Kingsland, GA	Camden County
Four-year starter in the highest classification in the state of Georgia. Enrolled at UGA in January and will play running back and slot receiver.						
DeAndre Johnson	DT	6-3	310	★★★	Newnan, GA	Northgate
Rated as the No. 28 defensive tackle in the country by Rivals.com and as the No. 33 prospect in Georgia.						
Kennar Johnson	DB	6-2	185	★★★	Perkinston, MS	Gulf Coast C.C.
Originally from Cleremont, Florida. Could play cornerback or safety at UGA and will arrive in June.						
Rico Johnson	WR	5-11	170	★★★	Swainsboro, GA	Swainsboro
Earned offer at UGA's one day camp last summer by running the 40-yard dash in under 4.3 seconds.						
Toby Johnson	DT	6-4	305	★★★★	Hutchinson, KS	Hutchinson C.C.
Originally from Atlanta, Georgia. Rated as the No. 8 JC prospect in the country by Rivals.com.						
Tim Kimbrough	LB	6-1	226	★★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Warren Central
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals250 selection. Rated as the nation's No. 6 inside linebacker by Rivals.com.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Brandon Kublanow	OL	6-3	289	★★★★	Marietta, GA	Walton
Rated as the top offensive lineman in the state of Georgia and the nations No. 2 center by Rivals.com. U.S. Army All-American.						
Brendan Langley	DB	6-1	188	★★★★	Marietta, GA	Kell
Selected to play in the Offense/Defense Bowl All American Bowl. Rivals250 selection and the nation's No. 21 cornerback by Rivals.com.						
Uriah LeMay	WR	6-1	181	★★★	Matthews, NC	Butler
Led team to a state championship with over 1,100 yards receiving and over 20 touchdowns. His brother, Christian, is a quarterback at UGA.						
Tray Matthews	DB	6-0	194	★★★★	Newnan, GA	Newnan
U.S. Army All-American and the nation's No. 5 safety prospect by Rivals.com. Enrolled at Georgia in January.						
Quincy Mauger	DB	6-0	197	★★★	Marietta, GA	Kell
Enrolled at Georgia in January. Rated as the No. 26 safety in the nation by Rivals.com and the No. 27 player in Georgia.						
Chris Mayes	DT	6-4	315	★★★	Perkinston, MS	Gulf Coast C.C.
Originally signed with UGA as a four-star recruit out of Griffin, Georgia. Enrolled at UGA in January with three years to play three.						
Shaun McGee	LB	6-3	233	★★★	Snellville, GA	Brookwood
Semper Fidelis All-American. Rated as the No. 25 outside linebacker in the nation and the No. 26 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Johnny O-Neal	LB	6-2	225	★★★★	Dublin, GA	West Laurens
U.S. Army All-American. Racked up 122 tackles and 11 tackles for a loss in 2012. Rated as the No. 16 inside linebacker in the country by Rivals.com.						
Brice Ramsey	QB	6-3	205	★★★★	Kingsland, GA	Camden County
Under Armour All-American that enrolled at Georgia in January. Rated as nation's No. 14 pro-style quarterback by Rivals.com.						
Ryne Rankin	LB	6-1	231	★★★	Orlando, FL	East River
Semper Fidelis All-American that enrolled at Georgia in January. Led East River in tackles for three straight years.						
Jonathon Rumph	WR	6-5	215	★★★★	Goodman, MS	Holmes C.C.
Rated as the No. 9 overall JC prospect by Rivals.com and the No. 2 JC wide receiver. Enrolled at Georgia in January.						
DeVondre Seymour	OL	6-6	290	★★★	Suwanee, GA	North Gwinnett
Rated as the nations No. 42 offensive tackle by Rivals.com and a two-year starter for North Gwinnett. Also 45th-ranked player in Georgia.						
Tramel Terry	ATH	6-0	190	★★★★	Goose Creek, SC	Goose Creek
Named Mr. Football in South Carolina in 2012. Under Armour All-American and selected to play in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						
A.J. Turman	RB	6-0	205	★★★★	Orlando, FL	Boone
Rivals250 selection that rushed for over 5,000 yards in his career. Rated as No. 19 running back in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Shaquille Wiggins	DB	5-10	166	★★★★	Tyrone, GA	Sandy Creek
Under Armour All-American that totaled nine interceptions in 2011. Rated as the No. 31cornerback in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Reggie Wilkerson	DB	5-11	163	★★★★	Ocala, FL	North Marion
Enrolled at Georgia in January and rated as the No. 23 cornerback in the country by Rivals.com. Also the No. 41 rated player in Florida.						

BULLDOGS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
61	David Andrews	C	6-2	295	Jr.	Johns Creek
24	Tristan Askew	DB	5-11	178	Jr.	Kent, WA
97	John Atkins	DT	6-4	310	Fr.	Thomson
31	Jon Bailey	CB	6-0	200	Jr.	Alpharetta
58	Sterling Bailey	DE	6-3	295	So.	Gainesville
32	Collin Barber	P	6-2	200	So.	Cartersville
10	Faton Bauta	QB	6-3	220	Fr.	West Palm Beach, FL
79	Mark Beard	OT	6-5	302	Jr.	Adamsville, AL
93	Patrick Beless	PK	5-9	155	So.	Atlanta
82	Michael Bennett	SE	6-3	204	Jr.	Alpharetta
7	Greg Bingham	QB	6-4	209	Jr.	Columbus
37	Devin Bowman	CB	6-0	180	So.	Rossville
39	Dominic Bryan	RB	6-0	235	Fr.	Germantown, MD
68	Chris Burnette	OG	6-2	322	Sr.	LaGrange
41	Brandon Burrows	ILB	6-3	248	Jr.	Marietta
70	Aulden Bynum	OL	6-5	260	Fr.	Valdosta
28	Corey Campbell	FB	5-10	215	Sr.	Hephzibah
60	Josh Cardiello	OL	6-3	280	Fr.	Buford
45	Reggie Carter	LB	6-1	224	Fr.	Snellville
41	Jared Chapple	TE	6-4	218	Fr.	Alpharetta
31	Chris Conley	FLK	6-3	205	Jr.	Dallas
78	Watts Dantzler	OL	6-7	320	Jr.	Dalton
91	Josh Dawson	OLB	6-4	250	So.	Tucker
2	Sheldon Dawson	CB	5-11	181	So.	Memphis, TN
23	Marc Deas	FS	6-1	212	Jr.	Kissimmee, FL
76	Zach DeBell	OT	6-6	293	So.	Tarpon Springs, FL
89	James DeLoach	OLB	6-3	270	So.	Millen
47	Ray Drew	DE	6-5	284	Jr.	Thomasville
6	Michael Erdman	SE	5-10	190	Jr.	Merritt Island, FL
97	Adam Erickson	P	5-10	175	Jr.	Athens
23	James Eunice	WR	6-0	175	Jr.	Valdosta
80	Ty Flournoy-Smith	TE	6-3	237	So.	Moultrie
72	Kenarious Gates	OT	6-5	318	Sr.	Grantville
60	Wright Gazaway	SN	6-0	243	Jr.	Buford
28	Devin Gillespie	S	5-10	195	Fr.	Grayson
15	J.J. Green	ATH	5-9	186	Fr.	Kingsland
3	Todd Gurley	RB	6-1	218	So.	Tarboro, NC
43	Merritt Hall	FB	5-11	238	So.	Alpharetta
19	Brandon Harton	TB	5-6	175	Sr.	Reidsville
25	Josh Harvey-Clemons	S	6-5	207	So.	Valdosta
12	Austin Herod	SS	5-10	183	Sr.	Woodstock
52	Amarlo Herrera	ILB	6-2	245	Jr.	College Park
48	Quayvon Hicks	FB	6-2	262	So.	Blackshear
75	Kolton Houston	OT	6-5	280	Jr.	Buford
90	Ethan Jackson	P	5-11	178	Sr.	Sandersville
59	Jordan Jenkins	OLB	6-3	257	So.	Hamilton
38	Clay Johnson	WR	6-1	170	Fr.	Calhoun
8	Jesse Jones	S	6-0	190	So.	Habersham
33	Kyle Karempelis	TB	5-9	183	Jr.	Roswell
53	Clint Kirk	DE	6-3	275	Sr.	Perry
64	Dallas Lee	OG	6-4	300	Sr.	Buford
16	Christian LeMay	QB	6-2	201	So.	Matthews, NC
74	Austin Long	OT	6-5	324	Sr.	Memphis, TN
66	Hunter Long	OG	6-4	310	So.	Memphis, TN
43	Tommy Long	ILB	6-2	220	Fr.	Marietta
83	Jack Loonam	TE	6-0	216	So.	Lexington, SC
88	Arthur Lynch	TE	6-5	258	Sr.	Dartmouth, MA
4	Keith Marshall	TB	5-11	216	So.	Raleigh, NC
14	Hutson Mason	QB	6-3	206	Jr.	Marietta
28	Tray Matthews	DB	6-0	194	Fr.	Newnan
20	Quincy Mauger	DB	6-0	197	Fr.	Marietta
47	Taylor Maxey	FB	5-10	223	Jr.	Statham
93	Chris Mayes	DT	6-4	315	So.	Griffin
46	A.J. McDonald	ILB	6-0	230	Jr.	Suwanee
27	Rhett McGowan	SE	6-0	190	Sr.	Calhoun
70	Eddie McQuillen	OT	6-8	300	So.	Newnan
26	Malcolm Mitchell	CB/SE	6-1	192	Jr.	Valdosta
77	Preston Mobley	OL	6-3	300	So.	Moultrie
39	Corey Moore	SS	6-2	214	Jr.	Griffin
13	Marshall Morgan	PK	6-3	201	So.	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
27	Greg Mulkey	TE	6-3	230	Sr.	Fairmount
11	Aaron Murray	QB	6-1	210	Sr.	Tampa, FL
11	Connor Norman	FS	5-10	207	Sr.	Duluth
23	Alex Parsons	TB	5-10	191	Sr.	Fayetteville
29	Jamal Payette	WR	6-3	190	Sr.	Cleveland
42	Dillard Pinkston	OLB	6-3	220	Fr.	Dallas, TX
94	Thomas Pritchard	PK	5-10	160	Fr.	Louisville
73	Greg Pyke	OG	6-6	327	Fr.	Baltimore, MD
12	Brice Ramsey	QB	6-3	205	Fr.	Kingsland
38	Ryne Rankin	LB	6-1	231	Fr.	Orlando, FL
20	Lucas Redd	FS	6-1	209	Jr.	Jefferson
87	Jay Rome	TE	6-6	265	So.	Valdosta
18	Jonathan Rumph	WR	6-5	215	Jr.	Cayce, SC
7	Blake Sailors	CB	5-11	187	Sr.	Athens
86	Justin Scott-Wesley	FLK	5-11	217	So.	Camilla
56	Garrison Smith	DE	6-3	297	Sr.	Atlanta
32	Matt Stagg	ILB	6-3	225	Fr.	Salt Lake City, UT
25	Jake Star	WR	6-5	220	So.	Lawrenceville
44	T.J. Stripling	OLB	6-6	235	Sr.	Decatur
5	Damian Swann	CB	5-11	189	Jr.	Atlanta
94	John Taylor	DL	6-4	335	Fr.	Millen
1	Tramel Terry	ATH	6-0	190	Fr.	Goose Creek, SC
71	John Theus	OT	6-6	309	So.	Jacksonville, FL
49	Nathan Theus	SN	6-3	249	So.	Jacksonville, FL
96	Mike Thornton	N	6-1	302	Jr.	Stone Mountain
8	Blake Tibbs	FLK	6-2	175	Fr.	Lithonia
37	Kenneth Towns	WR	6-3	202	Fr.	Albany
89	Cole Trolinger	TE	6-5	230	Fr.	Newnan
33	Chase Vasser	OLB	6-3	231	Sr.	Gainesville
30	Kosta Vavlas	ILB	6-0	219	Jr.	Tarpon Springs, FL
63	Xzavier Ward	OT	6-7	293	So.	Moultrie
2	Parker Welch	QB	6-3	199	Jr.	Jesup
9	Reggie Wilkerson	DB	5-11	163	Fr.	Ocala, FL
84	Hugh Williams	TE	6-5	241	Jr.	Atlanta
44	Drew Wilson	TE	6-2	205	Sr.	Tignall
51	Ramik Wilson	ILB	6-2	234	Jr.	Tampa, FL
17	Rantavious Wooten	FLK	5-10	179	Sr.	Belle Glade, FL
9	Curtis Wyatt	WR	6-1	200	Sr.	Locust Grove
35	Chris Young	FB	6-1	224	Sr.	Hinesville

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
A. Murray	14	174.82	249	386	10	64.5	3893	36	87	278.1
P. Welch	6	136.80	3	7	0	42.9	39	1	15	6.5

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. King	14	42	950	22.6	9	75	67.9
M. Mitchell	13	40	572	14.3	4	57	44.0
M. Brown	8	27	469	17.4	4	66	58.6

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. Gurley	14	222	1415	30	1385	6.2	17	55	98.9
K. Marshall	14	117	781	22	759	6.5	8	75	54.2
K. Malcome	10	57	274	2	272	4.8	2	30	27.2

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: A. Ogletree 111, S. Williams 98, J. Jones 85
Tackles for loss: J. Jones 24.5, A. Ogletree 11.5, J. Jenkins 8
Sacks: J. Jones 14.5, J. Jenkins 5, A. Ogletree 3
Interceptions: D. Swann 4, B. Rambo 3, S. Commings 3

NOTEBOOK

Like many teams, Georgia has become guarded about releasing depth charts before preseason practice. But this year, there's a good reason for that. Many position battles, and even the depth, could go down to the final week before the opener against Clemson.

That's especially true on defense.

"It's by far the most wide open competition that I can remember," coach **Mark Richt** said. "It's such a close battle. I don't know if that's good news or bad news. Until you start playing somebody besides yourself, you really don't know. But we absolutely have a bunch of guys who will be playing college football for the first time."

There could be seven or eight players in the mix for three positions on the defensive line. End **Garrison Smith**, a senior, is the closest to being a sure thing.

"They're all going to play," Richt said. "It's just a matter of who's going to start and substitution patterns."

The secondary is even a bigger unknown. Junior cornerback **Damian Swann** is established. Freshman safety **Tray Matthews** will be hard to beat out. Beyond that, get out the dart board because there will be three more freshmen reporting in August.

"It was wide open in the spring, and we've got a bunch of guys we signed that we want to take a look at, so I don't think anything's nailed down," Richt said.

• Even though the offensive line returns all five starters and key backup **Mark Beard**, the lineup is far from settled. Richt mentioned **Xzavier Ward**, **Watts Dantzler**, **Greg Pyke** and **Austin Long** as players improving.

"The better they get, the more pressure they put on guys who have been starters for us," Richt said. "So it's not so much a question mark of can they get the job done, it's a question of who's going to win the job. Who's going to win the most playing time."

• Another job up for grabs is the third running back behind **Todd Gurley** and **Keith Marshall**. **J.J. Green** "did a nice job," according to Richt, but he added, "We need more help to come in and compete for those spots."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Aaron Murray:** "I think Aaron Murray is a good player. I don't think he's a great player. I think he sees the field pretty well and he makes good decisions and he throws the ball accurately. I think he's got a good arm, not a great arm. His lack of size hurts him. If the pocket moves back on him and teams get a push up the middle, it's hard for shorter guys (like Murray) to function."

• **On this year's projections:** "Georgia is the best team in the East. I know they lost a lot of players on defense, but they have got a lot of defensive players back. They've got the best passing quarterback in the SEC and a lot of talented receivers."

Jordan Jenkins
Photo by Don Kelly/SportPics

cornerback Damian Swann.

One of the biggest concerns is replacing two nose tackles with John Jenkins and Kwame Geathers gone. Mike Thornton had a strong spring, and Chris Mayes and John Atkins provide depth. John Taylor was moved to end and backs up Smith, while Sterling Bailey and Ray Drew will battle for the other spot. New line coach Chris Wilson prefers to rotate players to keep them fresh, so there could be eight players getting meaningful snaps at three positions.

While Herrera is set at one inside linebacker spot, the other will be a battle between Ramik Wilson and freshman Reggie Carter. Another freshman, Ryne Rankin, earned trust as a much-needed backup to Herrera.

Jordan Jenkins is just a sophomore but is already one of the top playmakers on the defense. He inherits the role filled by Jarvis Jones, and there may not be any drop-off in production. The other outside linebacker spot is more fluid. It could be James Deloach or Chase Vasser, or the coaches may opt to employ the "Star" to keep Josh Harvey-Clemons on the field because he's one of the best athletes on defense. The star is sort of a hybrid of nickel back, rover and outside backer.

The secondary is crowded with young but unproven talent. Tray Matthews came in from high school and established himself as the top free safety. He does not have a typical freshman body.

Harvey-Clemons is set as the strong safety, but Corey Moore provides depth when Harvey-Clemons moves to star. The other corner opposite Swann may be Sheldon Dawson, about whom teammates have raved, or incoming freshman Shaq Wiggins. Redshirt freshman Reggie Wilkerson, true freshman Brandan Langley and junior college signee Kennar Johnson are pushing for playing time, if not starting jobs.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The kicking game has some unknowns even with both kickers returning as sophomores. Collin Barber was steady as a freshman, averaging 41.3 yards and forcing fair catches on nearly half of his punts (28 of 61). He has the leg strength to push that out and flip the field with some long punts.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Aaron Murray

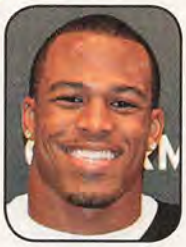
Holds school record with 95 career touchdown passes. ... Only SEC quarterback to have three consecutive 3,000-yard passing seasons. ... Tied career-bests with 427 yards and five TDs in Capital One Bowl vs. Nebraska. ... Legitimate Heisman candidate if Georgia stays in national championship hunt ... His passing efficiency rating of 174.82 was second in the nation, barely trailing Alabama's AJ McCarron (175.28). ... Should hold many SEC career records by end of the season.

EMERGING STAR

OLB Jordan Jenkins

A physical specimen and potentially as great as Jarvis Jones was, only faster. ... Recorded five sacks and eight tackles for loss in 2012, and was a force by late season. ... Also was credited with 23 quarterback hurries, one forced fumble and recovered one fumble. ... Doesn't seem to be daunted by replacing an All-American. ... Jenkins, from Hamilton, Ga., was rated the state's top prospect by Rivals.com in the 2012 class.

TOP NEWCOMER



FS Tray Matthews

Matthews enrolled early, took advantage of his opportunity and flew up the depth chart in spring practice. He's physically more developed than a typical freshman and would have to regress to lose his starting job. ... Very hard hitter and has great awareness. ... Had 51 tackles and 528 receiving yards as a senior at Newnan (Ga.) High. Rivals.com rated him as the No. 72 prospect in the nation.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.1	30
Rushing	142.6	73
Passing	242.4	40
Total	385.0	56
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.1	36
Rushing	147.2	56
Passing	181.3	17
Total	328.5	23
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 10	+ 0.77	19

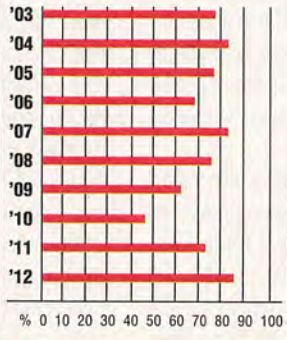
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.0	33
Rushing	164.0	49
Passing	244.5	48
Total	408.5	39
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	20.6	23
Rushing	101.2	11
Passing	176.0	10
Total	277.2	5
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.50	26

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	37.8	19
Rushing	182.6	43
Passing	285.1	30
Total	467.7	22
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.6	18
Rushing	182.1	77
Passing	175.7	8
Total	357.8	32
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 11	+ 0.79	20

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

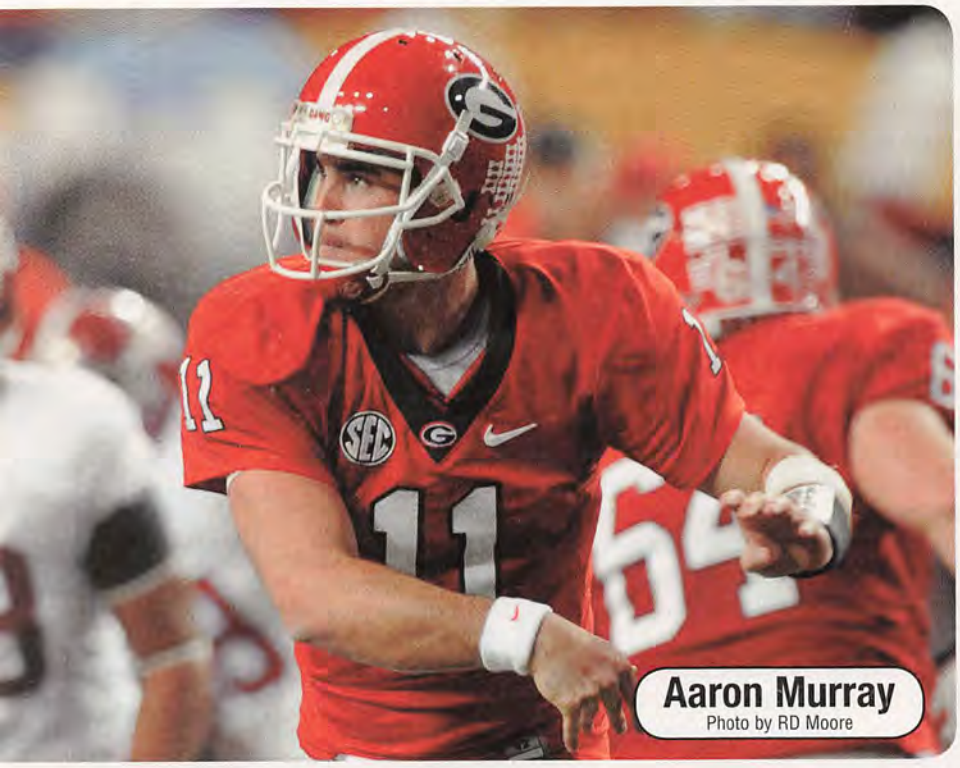


RESULTS

12-2, 7-1

W	BUFFALO	45-23
W	at Missouri	41-20
W	FAU	56-20
W	VANDERBILT	48-3
W	TENNESSEE	51-44
L	at South Carolina	7-35
W	at Kentucky	29-24
W	vs. Florida (Jacksonville)	17-9
W	OLE MISS	37-10
W	at Auburn	38-0
W	GEORGIA SOUTHERN	45-14
W	GEORGIA TECH	42-10
	SEC Championship	
L	vs. Alabama	28-32
	Capital One Bowl	
W	vs. Nebraska	45-31

PLAYER PROFILE



Aaron Murray
Photo by RD Moore

Murray's Back For One Last Title Shot

The official announcement came in January, but Aaron Murray made his decision as he walked off the Georgia Dome field early December in a heart-broken daze.

There was no way he could forgo his senior year at Georgia with unfinished business. Seeing Alabama — whom the Bulldogs came within one play of beating for the SEC championship — blow out Notre Dame, 42-14, in the national championship game only underscored just how close Murray and the Dawgs were to winning it all.

"I don't know many guys who wouldn't want to give it one more shot," Murray said. "It's definitely a goal to win the big one. As a team, we want to win games and win championships."

Murray holds the Georgia record with 95 career touchdown passes. He's also the only SEC passer with three 3,000-yard seasons before his senior year.

Barring injury, Murray will finish as the team's record holder in every major passing category. He needs just 154 completions and 1,438 yards to break David Greene's records of 849 and 11,528. With a 61.5 completion percentage, he holds a sizeable lead over Eric Zeier's career mark of 59.8.

Murray finished last season with a passing efficiency rating of 174.82, second best in the country.

But he didn't return to Georgia to pad his stats. He didn't need to stay in school for academic reasons. He has already graduated with a degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology.

The only thing on Murray's mind is winning the SEC and national championships.

"I'm not here for records," he said. "I want to win a championship. That's why I came back. I'll take 10 touchdowns and 1,000 yards as long as we win a championship."

When Murray applied to the NFL Draft board for an evaluation, he was projected to be a third-round pick. Much of that is due to his height — 6-1, a little shorter than the prototype. So Murray knows he has to have impeccable mechanics to overcome that deficiency.

He continues to work on his footwork to be able to extend plays while keeping his eyes downfield. He came to Georgia as a mobile quarterback but felt like he lost a step when he was told to stay in the pocket.

Not that he wants to become Russell Wilson, but Murray does want to add at least the threat of escaping the pocket to his game. Especially if it helps him add something to the trophy case.

Place-kicker Marshall Morgan needs to become more consistent and reliable. He missed four extra points and six field goal attempts, and many of his good kicks buzzed the uprights.

Punt returns were too often an adventure with Malcolm Mitchell, Damian Swann and Rhett McGowan misplaying balls and letting them hit and roll. Mitchell can be an explosive kickoff returner, but he needs to be more assertive. One area of substantial improvement has been the coverage teams.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

There can be no assertions of a weak schedule this year. The Dawgs play three potential top 10 teams before October.

They open on the road against Clemson, followed by a home game against South Carolina, which will be shooting for an unprecedented fourth consecutive win over Georgia. After a bye week and a breather against North Texas, the Dawgs close out September with a home game against LSU.

October consists of road games with Tennessee and Vanderbilt, sandwiched around Missouri's first visit to Sanford Stadium. One break is that they have a bye week before the Florida game, then play Appalachian State before travelling to Auburn. They close out at home against Kentucky and on the road against Georgia Tech.

— Guerry Clegg

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	at Clemson	11-2
Sept. 7	SOUTH CAROLINA	11-2
Sept. 21	NORTH TEXAS	4-8
Sept. 28	LSU	10-3
Oct. 5	at Tennessee	5-7
Oct. 12	MISSOURI	5-7
Oct. 19	at Vanderbilt	9-4
Nov. 2	vs. Florida	11-2
Nov. 9	APPALACHIAN STATE	8-4
Nov. 16	at Auburn	3-9
Nov. 23	KENTUCKY	2-10
Nov. 30	at Georgia Tech	7-7

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KENTUCKY WILDCATS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Neal Brown | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: D.J. Eliot** | **STADIUM: Commonwealth Stadium: 67,942**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
2-10 overall, 0-8 SEC (7th, East)

COACH:
Mark Stoops — At Kentucky and overall; 1st year

RETURNING STARTERS:
10; 4 offense, 5 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Jalen Whitlow, RB Josh Clemons, RB Raymond Sanders, WR Demarco Robinson, DE Bud Dupree, DE Za'Darius Smith, LB Avery Williamson, S Ashely Lowery

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Stoops would like to see the two lines become the backbone of his team, starting with his first love, the defensive line, anchored by veterans and bookended by two ends with star potential in Smith and Dupree. While the offensive line will have to replace two long-time starters in the middle, it was a pleasant surprise this spring.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Much like the previous staff, the new staff is searching for playmakers. For instance, the new pass-happy Air Raid attack is still trying to solidify its quarterback and find playmakers on the outside. Defensively, UK has a solid first group, but needs to develop depth.

KEY LOSSES:
C Matt Smith, OG Larry Warford, WR La'Rod King, DE Collins Ukwu, CB/S Martavius Neloms

OVERVIEW:
With a new coach and the school's best recruiting class in decades, Kentucky has loads of momentum and renewed fan interest, but it still has a long way to go to become a contender in the loaded SEC. Coaches are urging patience as they put together the pieces, but they expect to be more competitive than last season's 2-10 finish.

Stoops Brings High Expectations, New Beginning at UK

It was more than an introduction. It was a statement.

There wasn't just a table with a microphone when Kentucky introduced Mark Stoops as its new head coach in early December.

There were giant inflatables, cheerleaders, dancers, multiple mascots, a fog machine, the UK band and more than 500 former football players and high rollers.

Other amenities at the indoor training facility, which housed the news conference, included a giant Wildcat banner, a high-definition LED board, and a concert quality audio system, all to the tune of about $40,000.

"That was us saying that this is a big deal, that Kentucky football is a big deal," said Jason Schlafer, the UK associate athletic director responsible for putting the event together. "Our football program is valuable."

After a 2-10 season and dwindling fans at Commonwealth Stadium, Kentucky had to make big changes, which included the hiring of Stoops from Florida State.

Like a line of dominoes, other things happened shortly thereafter, including an important vote to allow UK to allocate millions of dollars for renovations at the stadium and football facilities.

Less than two months into the job, Stoops and staff managed to sign the highest-rated recruiting class in school history.

The coach talked about sending a clear message to UK's current and future players about the type of program he wants to have at Kentucky.

"There's no magic wand, but a blue-collar, hard-hat mentality," Stoops said. "To me there's no getting around that. There's hard work to be done."

The hard work included putting in a new up-tempo offense under former Kentucky player and Texas Tech offensive guru Neal Brown, as well as a new 4-3 defensive scheme under coordinator D.J. Eliot, who coached under Stoops at FSU.

There will be challenges, especially trying to rebuild in a league like the SEC. But there is much to like about the new direction of UK football.

"I feel like the sky's the limit and that's why we're here and that's what we believe: that you can definitely build this thing into a championship caliber team," Stoops said.

The Kentucky fans bought in, with 50,831 showing up at Commonwealth Stadium for the Blue-White Spring Game in April. That number was more than double the 1987 record for a spring game.

Quite a statement.

OFFENSE

The familiar sound of Air Raid sirens filled Commonwealth Stadium for the Blue-White Spring Game in April.

Those sirens brought back familiar fond feelings for fans of the Tim Couch era at Kentucky, when a pass-happy offensive attack helped fill the stadium and the school record books in the late 1990s.

UK's new offensive coordinator, Neal Brown, is more than familiar with those days; he was a Wildcats' receiver at the time. The Kentucky native returned from Texas Tech, where he ran one of the most up-tempo, prolific offenses in the nation. He takes over one of the nation's least productive offenses.

Brown's new scheme is so simple at its core that he installed it in just three days, adding wrinkles throughout the spring. Installing the offense is one thing, trying to figure out who will run it is quite another.

The three-way quarterback competition among sophomores Maxwell Smith,

Avery Williamson
Photo by Brian Tirpak

Patrick Towles and Jalen Whitlow could go at least two weeks into fall camp.

Last season's offense ran well under Smith (975 passing yards, eight touchdowns) before he missed most of the final eight games with injuries. Whitlow, who started in his place those final games, completed just 54 percent of his passes for 801 yards and three scores.

Whitlow showed new maturity and confidence in the offseason, and his ability to make plays with his legs may make him UK's most dangerous option, but all three quarterbacks are short on places to distribute the ball.

Kentucky went into the spring with just six scholarship receivers after graduating three starters, including leader La'Rod King. Top returnees include junior Demarco Robinson, sophomores Daryl Collins, A.J. Legree and DeMarcus Sweat. Sophomore Rashad Cunningham impressed in the spring as well, but expect several true freshmen to be in the mix.

UK is not short on tight ends, who will be integral to the new scheme. Contenders include junior college transfer Steven Borden, as well as Jordan Aumiller and Tyler Robinson.

And even though the offense is thought of as pass-oriented, it will be the run that will make the difference.

"If we can run the football, then we have some opportunities to hit some big plays," Brown said.

There are plenty of candidates at that spot with seniors Raymond Sanders and Jonathan George returning, as well as Josh Clemons, who sat out last season with an injured knee. Sophomore Dyshawn Mobley also showed promise in the spring.

Stoops was pleasantly surprised by the offensive line, but UK needs to develop more depth and will have to replace a pair of long-time starters — center Matt Smith and guard Larry Warford.

DEFENSE

In just one season under Stoops and D.J. Eliot, Florida State's defense went from one of the nation's worst to one of the best.

The two coaches are hoping to work that kind of magic at Kentucky.

Any evolution likely will start at the place where Stoops and Eliot, now UK's defensive coordinator, specialize: the defensive line.

With the most veterans returning of any place on the field, it could serve as a strong foundation for Kentucky's defense as it changes over from a 3-4 last season to a 4-3 this season.

Four veterans return at the tackle spots, including seniors Donte Rumph and Mister Cobble. By the end of spring, the ends looked like they could be the defense's strength behind converted linebacker Alvin "Bud" Dupree and junior college

Maxwell Smith
Photo by Brian Tirpak

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jalen Whitlow*	So.	Separated himself in spring game as dual-threat.	Maxwell Smith, So.
RB	Raymond Sanders	Sr.	High IQ, ability to catch ball make him key player.	Josh Clemons, So.
WR	Demarco Robinson	Jr.	Team's leading returning WR; has big-play ability.	Rashad Cunningham, So.
WR	A.J. Legree	So.	Started to come on at end of fall, throughout spring.	DeMarcus Sweat, So.
TE	Steven Borden	Jr.	Big-target JC transfer could play multiple positions.	Jordan Aumiller, Sr.
TE	Tyler Robinson	Sr.	Part-time starter has size, hands to make move in fall.	Ronnie Shields, Jr.
LT	Darrian Miller*	Jr.	Two-year starter has size, smarts to be leader of line.	T.J. Jones, Fr.
LG	Zach West*	So.	Slowed by shoulder surgery, should be fine for opener.	Teven Eatmon-Nared, Jr.
C	Zach Myers	Fr.	Will have to fill big void left by three-year starter.	Jon Toth, Fr.
RG	Kevin Mitchell*	Sr.	Versatile lineman returns to anchor right side.	John Gruenschlaeger, So.
RT	Jordan Swindle	So.	Last year's top reserve at lineman as a true freshman.	Shaquille Love, So.
K	Austin MacGinnis	Fr.	Highly rated kicker likely to replace long-time starter.	Joe Mansour, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Alvin "Bud" Dupree*	Jr.	Freakish athlete settled into new position.	Langston Newton, Fr.
DT	Mister Cobble	Sr.	Sporadic starter seems to have made moves in spring.	Tristian Johnson, Sr.
DT	Donte Rumph*	Sr.	Impressed staff with speed, strength before injury.	Christian Coleman, Jr.
DE	Za'Darius Smith	Jr.	Strong JC transfer knows system, has big-play potential.	TraVaughn Paschal, Jr.
LB	Avery Williamson*	Sr.	Second in SEC in tackles (135); vocal leader of defense.	Malcolm McDuffen, Jr.
LB	Miles Simpson*	Jr.	Had 70 tackles as a sophomore; injured much of spring.	Kory Brown, Jr.
LB	Khalid Henderson	So.	Top reserve LB last year makes play for starting spot.	Josh Forrest, So.
CB	Cody Quinn	So.	Added bulk, hopes to build on strong freshman season.	J.D. Harmon, So.
CB	Fred Tiller	So.	Showed flashes of big-play ability as true freshman.	Eric Simmons, Jr.
SS	Daron Blaylock	So.	Versatile, quick player gained key experience as freshman.	Zack Blaylock, So.
FS	Ashely Lowery*	Jr.	Emerged as key leader in spring; 43 tackles in eight starts.	Glenn Faulkner, So.
P	Landon Foster*	So.	Averaged 42.9 yards a punt, highest ever by a UK freshman.	Joe Mansour, Sr.

*Returning Starter

WILDCATS RECRUITING 2013

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Jason Hatcher
Hatcher is a U.S. Army All-American that Kentucky grabbed late in the process. The Wildcats did a tremendous job keeping Hatcher in state and, in the SEC, a pass rush couldn't be more important. Hatcher has tremendous potential off the edge and upgrades the talent up front.

Za'Darius Smith
Like Hatcher, Smith will give the Wildcats' pass rush a boost right away. As a JC prospect, Smith could be the most important signee in this class for the Wildcats when it comes to the 2013 season. He will be asked to play major snaps in his first season in Lexington.

Marcus McWilson
Kentucky struggled to defend the pass in 2012, and McWilson will bring his range and ball skills to improve that aspect of the secondary. He is a free safety prospect that can play deep and make plays on the ball while preventing the big play against the run and pass.

THE SLEEPER

Jeff Badet
Not the biggest guy at just 160 pounds, but it was his speed that was a determining factor. "He's got that home run speed so it was important to us," coach Mark Stoops told CatsIllustrated.com

Committments	22
Average Stars	3.05
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	3
★★★☆☆	17
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	67
National Rank: 29	SEC: 13

2014 NEEDS: Kentucky did not sign a linebacker in the 2013 class, so that position will be a big priority in 2014. The Wildcats will likely bring in at least three linebackers in the class, and as many as two inside linebacker prospects. Kentucky may also take a big swing at a couple of elite pass rushers on defense. Running back and quarterback will also be positions of need for the Wildcats in the next class. Quality, however, will be more important than quantity.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jeff Badet	WR	5-11	160	★★★	Orlando, FL	Freedom
Chose Kentucky over offers from Louisville, North Carolina State and South Florida. Had 881 yards receiving and 10 touchdowns in 2012.						
Alvonte Bell	DE	6-6	228	★★★	Miramar, FL	Everglades
Racked up 40 tackles and 11 sacks in 2011 and 14 sacks in 2012. Rated as the No. 24 weakside defensive end in the country by Rivals.com.						
Javess Blue	WR	6-1	195	★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler County C.C.
Had 27 catches for 586 yards and three touchdowns in 2011 and 65 catches for 1,064 yards and 12 touchdowns in 2012.						
Steven Borden	TE	6-3	241	★★	Waxahachie, TX	Kilgore J.C.
Had 11 catches for 181 yards and four touchdowns in 2012. Averaged over 15 yards per catch in both seasons at the JUCO level.						
Justin Day	OL	6-8	285	★★★	Aiken, SC	South Aiken
Rated as the No. 18 overall prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com. Chose Kentucky over offers from Maryland and Southern Miss.						
Jason Hatcher	DE	6-2	240	★★★★	Louisville, KY	Trinity
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 8 weakside defensive end in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Nick Haynes	OL	6-4	294	★★★	Niceville, FL	Niceville
Rated as the No. 40 offensive guard in the nation by Rivals.com. Chose Kentucky over offers from Florida Atlantic, Central Florida and Marshall.						
Jacob Hyde	DT	6-2	313	★★★	Manchester, KY	Clay County
Rated as the nation's No. 46 defensive tackle prospect and the No. 8 prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com. Had nine tackles for loss in 2012.						
Jaleel Hytchye	DB	5-11	165	★★★	Cincinnati, OH	La Salle
Rated as the No. 48 cornerback in the country and the No. 36 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com. Had three interceptions in 2012.						
Jojo Kemp	RB	5-10	189	★★★	Deland, FL	Deland
Rated as the No. 10 all-purpose back in the nation by Rivals.com. Had 1,163 yards rushing and 14 touchdowns in 2011 and 1,489 yards and 23 touchdowns in 2012.						
Austin MacGinnis	K	5-11	170	★★★	Prattville, AL	Prattville
Rated as the No. 3 kicker in the country by Rivals.com. Hit 70 percent of his field goal attempts in 2012 and was 33 of 34 on extra points.						
Blake McClain	DB	5-11	181	★★★	Winter Park, FL	Winter Park
Rated as the No. 61 cornerback in the nation by Rivals.com. Named defensive back MVP of the NUC Orlando Five-Star Showcase in 2012.						
Marcus McWilson	DB	6-0	195	★★★★	Youngstown, OH	Cardinal Mooney
A Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 18 safety prospect in the nation and as the No. 10 player in Ohio by Rivals.com.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Kyle Meadows	OL	6-5	270	★★★	West Chester, OH	Lakota West
Chose Kentucky over offers from Florida State and Michigan State. Rated as the No. 47 offensive tackle in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Regie Meant	DT	6-5	271	★★	Cape Coral, FL	Baker
Racked up 23 tackles and four sacks as a junior in 2011 and added 68 tackles, two sacks, and a forced fumble in 2012.						
Ramsey Meyers	OL	6-3	290	★★★	Orange Park, FL	Ridgeview
Chose Kentucky over offers from Central Florida and UAB. Bench pressed 305 pounds and squated 445 pounds in 2011.						
Alex Montgomery	WR	6-1	180	★★★	Weston, FL	Cypress Bay
Scored 13 total touchdowns in 2011. Rated as the No. 51 wide receiver in the nation and as the No. 81 overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com.						
Reese Phillips	QB	6-2	218	★★★	Signal Mountain, TN	Signal Mountain
Had 1,970 yards passing and completed 70 percent of his passes in 2011. Rated as the No. 25 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Za-Darius Smith	DE	6-6	257	★★★★	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
Rated as the No. 15 overall JUCO prospect in the country and as a four-star prospect by Rivals.com. Had 46 tackles and 6.5 sacks in 2012.						
Khalid Thomas	ATH	5-10	175	★★★	Tallahassee, FL	Godby
Rated as the No. 35 athlete in the country by Rivals.com. Had 965 yards rushing and 461 yards receiving, and averaged 10 yards per touch in 2011.						
Ryan Timmons	WR	5-10	186	★★★	Frankfort, KY	Franklin County
Had 1,382 yards receiving and 20 touchdowns and rushed for 1,101 yards and 18 touchdowns in 2011. Rated as the No. 5 overall prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com.						
Nate Willis	DB	6-0	180	★★★	Yuma, AZ	Arizona Western C.C.
Rated as the No. 54 overall JUCO prospect in the nation by Rivals.com. Had 19 tackles and an interception in 2012.						

WILDCATS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
53	Matthew Adolph	LS	6-2	223	Jr.	Dublin, OH
86	Jordan Aumiller	TE	6-4	233	Sr.	Danville
48	John Ballis	TE	6-2	216	Fr.	Houston, TX
90	Tanner Blain	K	6-2	192	Fr.	Lindenhurst, IL
7	Daron Blaylock	S	6-1	213	So.	Marietta, GA
27	Shawn Blaylock	CB	5-10	166	Fr.	Lithonia, GA
17	Zack Blaylock	S	6-0	191	So.	Marietta, GA
85	Steven Borden	WR/TE	6-3	241	Jr.	Waxahachie, TX
44	Seth Bowden	TE	6-5	220	Fr.	Louisville
10	Tyler Brause	LB	6-4	240	Jr.	Sycamore, OH
34	Kory Brown	LB	6-0	205	Jr.	Moncks Corner, SC
81	Kyle Budde	LS	6-6	221	Jr.	Mason, OH
98	Thomas Chapman	DT	6-4	309	Fr.	Louisville
21	Josh Clemons	RB	5-10	212	So.	Fayetteville, GA
87	Bookie Cobbins	WR	6-0	187	So.	New Orleans, LA
97	Mister Cobble	DT	6-0	340	Sr.	Louisville
92	Christian Coleman	DT	6-3	295	Jr.	Milan, TN
23	Daryl Collins	WR	5-11	205	So.	Gadsden, AL
21	Rodney Cox	CB	6-0	178	So.	Louisville
81	Rashad Cunningham	WR	6-4	219	So.	Mobile, AL
62	Tyler Davenport	OT	6-5	297	Jr.	Hodgenville
60	Alvin Davis, Jr.	DE	6-4	269	Jr.	Jesup, GA
63	Bill Davis	OG	6-2	329	So.	Lexington
28	Eric Dixon	S	5-11	189	Jr.	Mobile, AL
50	Mike Douglas	DL	6-4	269	Jr.	Largo, FL
26	Tre' Dunn	LB	6-2	221	Jr.	Harrodsburg
2	Alvin Dupree	DE	6-4	254	Jr.	Irwinton, GA
76	Teven Eatmon-Nared	OG	6-7	339	Jr.	Bucyrus, OH
18	Glenn Faulkner	S	6-2	192	So.	East St. Louis, IL
8	Josh Forrest	LB	6-3	241	So.	Paducah
9	Landon Foster	P	6-1	206	So.	Franklin, TN
25	Jonathan George	RB	5-10	221	Sr.	Lincoln, AL
31	John Giddens	RB	5-9	175	So.	Louisville
64	Max Godby	C	6-4	291	Jr.	Louisville
52	Patrick Graffree	DT	6-4	287	Fr.	Elizabethtown
71	John Gruenschlaeger	OT	6-11	340	So.	Fort Thomas
15	J.D. Harmon	CB	6-2	191	So.	Paducah
20	Josh Harris	S	6-0	194	Fr.	Maysville
22	Khalid Henderson	LB	6-1	224	So.	Mableton, GA
91	Farrington Huguenin	DE	6-4	269	So.	Columbia, SC
88	A.J. Johnson	WR	6-2	187	Fr.	Portland, OR
47	Jabari Johnson	DT	6-1	265	So.	Stone Mountain, GA
51	Tristian Johnson	DT	6-1	277	Sr.	LaGrange, GA
43	Cody Jones	FB	5-11	216	Sr.	Williamsburg
51	T.J. Jones	OT	6-6	320	Fr.	Myrtle Beach, SC
82	Anthony Kendrick	TE	6-3	241	Sr.	Katy, TX
13	Jared Leet	HLDR	6-3	188	So.	Powell, OH
6	A.J. Legree	WR	6-1	188	So.	Fort White, FL
29	Cody Lewis	CB	6-0	182	Fr.	Alcoa, TN
46	Patrick Ligon	TE	6-4	250	Sr.	Germantown, TN
58	Shaquille Love	OG	6-4	317	So.	Harriman, TN
5	Ashely Lowery	S	6-1	219	Jr.	Cleveland, GA
88	Joe Mansour	K/P	6-2	188	Sr.	LaGrange, GA
59	Kelly Mason	LS	6-3	221	So.	Rockton, IL
34	Jerry McCray	RB	6-0	197	Fr.	Detroit, MI
54	Malcolm McDuffen	LB	6-3	220	Jr.	Hopkinsville
25	Cantrell McKinley	S	6-0	209	So.	Texarkana, TX
77	Darrian Miller	OT	6-5	288	Jr.	Lexington
79	Kevin Mitchell	OT	6-6	296	Sr.	Winston, GA
33	Dyshawn Mobley	RB	5-11	216	So.	Powell, TN
57	Zach Myers	C	6-3	289	Fr.	Miamisburg, OH
95	Langston Newton	DE	6-4	271	Fr.	Carmel, IN
41	TraVaughn Paschal	LB/DE	6-4	250	Jr.	Odenton, MD
12	Reese Phillips	QB	6-2	218	Fr.	Signal Mountain, TN
83	Derrick Quarles	WR	5-11	188	So.	Russellville
16	Cody Quinn	CB	5-10	177	So.	Middletown, OH
49	Demarius Rancifer	LB	6-2	216	So.	Pensacola, FL
9	Demarco Robinson	WR	5-10	159	Jr.	Ellenwood, GA
89	Tyler Robinson	TE	6-3	261	Sr.	Friendsville, TN
99	Donte Rumph	DT	6-3	323	Sr.	St. Matthews, SC
4	Raymond Sanders	RB	5-8	199	Sr.	Stone Mountain, GA
29	Austin Sheehan	WR	5-9	160	Fr.	Ft. Thomas
80	Ronnie Shields	TE	6-5	234	Jr.	Stone Mountain, GA
38	Eric Simmons	CB	6-0	203	Jr.	Atlanta, GA
32	Miles Simpson	LB	6-2	228	Jr.	Independence
42	Erico Smith	S	5-11	199	So.	Fisherville
69	Matt Smith	C	6-4	296	Sr.	Louisville
11	Maxwell Smith	QB	6-4	232	So.	Granada Hills, CA
94	Za'Darius Smith	DE	6-6	257	Jr.	Greenville, AL
44	Max Strong	K	5-2	177	Fr.	Louisville
83	DeMarcus Sweat	WR	6-1	196	So.	Lithonia, GA
70	Jordan Swindle	OT	6-7	299	So.	St. Johns, FL
35	William Tanner	WR	6-0	191	Jr.	Nashville, TN
30	Justin Taylor	RB	5-10	217	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
45	Pancho Thomas	LB	6-0	225	So.	Tallahassee, FL
3	Fred Tiller	DB	6-0	170	So.	Homerville, GA
72	Jon Toth	OT	6-5	289	Fr.	Indianapolis, IN
14	Patrick Towles	QB	6-5	234	So.	Ft. Thomas
37	Dakotah Tyler	S	5-11	207	Sr.	Indianapolis, IN
39	Darrell D.J. Warren	FB	6-0	242	Jr.	Alcoa, TN
55	Jordan Watson	OG	6-4	322	Fr.	Fayetteville, GA
75	Zach West	OG	6-4	312	So.	Lexington
13	Jalen Whitlow	QB	6-2	208	So.	Prattville, AL
36	Jerry Williams	CB	6-0	168	So.	Lexington
24	R.J. Williams	CB	6-0	193	Jr.	Albany, NY
78	Zane Williams	DT	6-4	271	Fr.	Lexington
40	Avery Williamson	LB	6-1	241	Sr.	Milan, TN
10	Jeff Witthuhn	QB	6-3	237	Fr.	Bowling Green
43	Sterling Wright	S	5-11	203	Fr.	Miami, FL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
J. Whitlow	10	99.5	87	161	2	54.0	801	3	61	80.1
M. Smith	4	135.5	103	150	4	68.7	975	8	56	243.8

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
L. King	12	48	488	10.2	4	61	40.7
D. Robinson	12	28	297	10.6	0	35	24.8
A. Boyd	12	24	233	9.7	2	21	19.4

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
R. Sanders	11	125	696	27	669	5.4	5	67	60.8
J. George	12	108	528	24	504	4.7	4	45	42.0
J. Whitlow	10	68	312	106	206	3.0	3	21	20.6

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: A. Williamson 135, A. Dupree 91, M. Simpson 70
Tackles for loss: A. Dupree 12.5, C. Ukwu 6, D. Rumph 6, T. Wyndham 6
Sacks: A. Dupree 6.5, C. Ukwu 4, D. Rumph 4
Interceptions: J.D. Harmon 2, A. Williamson 1, M. Neloms 1, A. Lowery 1

NOTEBOOK

Tucked inside the Kentucky football training facility is an office where meathead and egghead collide.

And the man directing that controlled collision is **Erik Korem**, the Cats' new High Performance Coach.

Other than head coach **Mark Stoops**, there probably isn't another individual with his hands in every crevice of the football program more than Korem: players' strength and conditioning, their mental state, their practice plans, their sleep patterns, their food intake.

All of it goes through Korem and his support staff.

The concept of a high performance coordinator is simple, and Korem certainly isn't the mastermind. But what he is trying to create at UK is the first of its kind in college football, Korem said.

In many ways, Kentucky's players could be the guinea pigs for a football training revolution.

"There are quite a few NFL teams that are wanting to come down and take a look at what we're doing," Korem said. "So we here at Kentucky are at the very front and people are going to want to follow us."

The revolution includes wholesale changes in eating habits with a team dietician, as well as training segments for coaches and players with **Gershon Tenenbaum**, whom Korem calls "the Michael Jordan of sports psychology."

Another key component in the high performance concept is the use of athlete tracking technology. In fact, a computer dashboard is being developed for each player on the team to measure basic body functions as well as distance, acceleration (measured in three different ways), impact and velocity.

• Wearing his blue, Stoops said he still has moments where he feels quite green. He was reminded of his first-year head coaching status during the Blue-White Spring Game.

"It took me a few series (to get comfortable)," he said. "I didn't know what to do there for a while; I was just watching both sides."

He also was dealing with hearing both sides.

"I couldn't figure out my headset going from offense to defense and all that," he said laughing. "Somebody gave me a little lesson before we went out there. Once I figured out the headset, I was able to listen to both sides, so that worked out pretty good."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On last season:** "Kentucky was really bad when we played them because all their quarterbacks were out (due to injuries). They gave up, threw in the flag. They might be better if everybody is well and a year older."

• **On the offense:** "If they can keep the quarterback healthy, they'll be a pretty good offensive team. They have receivers with experience. Their backs are functional. The best back is Josh Clemons; he didn't get to play at all last year. If he comes back from injury, they'll have a good back. If not, they'll be OK there. They never got the running back healthy and when they lost their quarterback, they had nothing."

• **On the defense:** "They'll struggle a little bit. They don't have a lot of SEC players on defense."

Raymond Sanders
Photo by Brian Tirpak

transfer Za'Darius Smith.

The gruesome twosome tore through the UK offensive line several times in the spring game and looked the part of SEC defenders. They will be key for Kentucky, Stoops said.

"If you can get some pressure with four guys, then you can put another guy in coverage," he said.

UK will need all the help it can get as it struggles with depth, speed and size at the linebacker spot, as well as in the secondary.

"Our defensive line is ahead of the game with our defensive unit, but everybody in the back end has still got a ways to go," Eliot said this spring.

The Cats return linebacker Avery Williamson (second in the SEC with 135 tackles), Dupree (91 tackles), linebacker Miles Simpson (70) and free safety Ashely Lowery (43 in eight games).

Kentucky coaches seem comfortable with their first-string players, but as it has the past few seasons, a lack of depth could be a serious problem for the Cats. Injuries at any position could mean another true freshman is called on to make plays.

That happened last season when the secondary was hit hard by injuries, forcing freshmen like Cody Quinn, J.D. Harmon and Fred Tiller onto the field at cornerback.

That playing experience might help them this season even as they play in the new system.

"It's a lot easier to go out and compete a little bit more because we got the experience so early and we got to grow up a lot faster," Harmon said.

The coaches' attitudes have given the defense a little more swagger, and Dupree said he can see how the Seminoles' defense underwent such a drastic change in such a short time.

"Every coach on defense has enthusiasm," he said. "Every time you make a play, the coaches want you to get crunk, get live."

SPECIAL TEAMS

One of the few things that won't end up getting a major overhaul in the fall will be UK's special teams. With everyone back at all but one specialist position, a lot of what the Cats used to do will continue.

"There's a lot of carry over," special teams coach Bradley Dale Peveto said, adding that there's been a strong

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

DE Alvin "Bud" Dupree

After being a defensive nomad his first two seasons, playing multiple positions in multiple schemes, Dupree has settled in nicely at defensive end and looks to build on his 91 tackles, including 12.5 for a loss, and 6.5 sacks from last season. ... Described as a "freak" by teammates, the 6-4, 254-pounder wreaked havoc on the Cats' offense in spring practice. "He kills every two-minute drill we've done," offensive coordinator Neal Brown said. "He gets off the edge fast, he's athletic."

EMERGING STAR

QB Jalen Whitlow

Coaches talked about a lack of separation at the quarterback spot in the spring, but after the final scrimmage, Whitlow looked like the one to beat, leading UK on three scoring drives, making plays with his arm and feet. ... The sophomore showed more accuracy (completed 17 of 28 passes for 193 yards) than he did when forced into action as a true freshman, starting the season's final seven games. He showed more maturity and confidence overall.

TOP NEWCOMER

DE Za'Darius Smith

Coaches Mark Stoops and D.J. Eliot have a history of churning out high-caliber defensive ends and Smith looks like he will be next in a long line of them. ... The 6-6, 257-pound junior college transfer more than looks the part and showed a strong ability to get to the quarterback in the spring. ... Smith, who didn't start playing football until his senior year of high school, knows the system already (arriving with JC line coach Jimmy Brumbaugh) and has been like a second coach in the spring.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.2	34
Rushing	158.5	53
Passing	269.3	23
Total	427.9	27
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.4	72
Rushing	177.1	85
Passing	177.1	14
Total	354.2	45
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.31	75

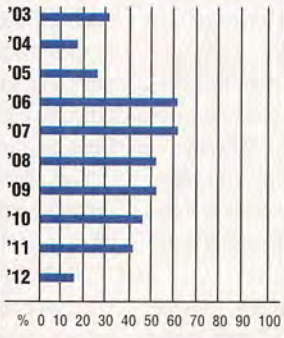
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	15.8	117
Rushing	124.2	90
Passing	135.6	114
Total	259.8	118
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.7	53
Rushing	183.2	87
Passing	193.8	21
Total	377.0	58
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	49

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	17.9	116
Rushing	138.8	87
Passing	176.2	102
Total	315.0	113
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	31.0	85
Rushing	161.3	62
Passing	229.7	57
Total	391.0	59
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.33	82

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



2-10, 0-8

L	at Louisville	14-32
W	KENT STATE	47-14
L	WESTERN KENTUCKY (OT)	31-32
L	at Florida	0-38
L	SOUTH CAROLINA	17-38
L	MISSISSIPPI STATE	14-27
L	at Arkansas	7-49
L	GEORGIA	24-29
L	at Missouri	10-33
L	VANDERBILT	0-40
W	SAMFORD	34-3
L	at Tennessee	17-37

PLAYER PROFILE

Josh Clemons
Photo by AP Photo/Ed Reinke

Familiar Feelings Return for Clemons

When a player talks about taking a hit, it's rarely with a massive smile.

But there was sophomore Josh Clemons, beaming broadly as he discussed the sensation.

"It's been a long time since I got hit," the Kentucky running back said after a spring scrimmage. "I'm just enjoying the moment."

The moment has taken years to achieve.

Clemons showed tons of promise two years ago as a true freshman, bouncing off multiple defenders, then bolting down the right sideline at Commonwealth Stadium for an 87-yard touchdown against Central Michigan, the longest TD run in the facility's history.

That was on Sept. 10, 2011, and it would be the last time Clemons would score for longer than he ever imagined. A few weeks later, he was sidelined for the season with a torn right meniscus against South Carolina. When he went down, he was the team's leading rusher with 279 yards.

The 5-10, 212-pound runner tried to return last season, but swelling and discomfort in his knee forced him to sit on the sidelines and watch everyone else get hit instead.

This spring was huge for Clemons, who had several touchdowns in the Cats' two closed scrimmages and showed promise in the spring game in front of 50,000-plus fans.

"Josh Clemons really looked good," offensive coordinator Neal Brown said after the spring game, in which Clemons rushed 10 times for 56 yards and caught two passes for 17 more. "He made a couple of really nice cuts and that was the thing that stuck out to me as much as anything. He made some plays."

For the first time in a long time, Clemons trusts his knee.

"It's feeling good," he said this spring. "It's the best it's felt."

Whether Clemons, who rushed for 2,003 yards and 25 touchdowns as a senior at Whitewater (Ga.) High School, is actually at 100 percent physically is less important to Brown than where the rusher is mentally.

"It's a step that he thinks he is (better)," the offensive coordinator said. "That's the hardest thing with knees, is mentally. ... If he mentally is there, that's a huge, huge breaking point. There's probably some things he can get better at, but I was big-time encouraged with him."

Even though he didn't score a touchdown in the spring finale, Clemons drew praise from head coach Mark Stoops.

"He's done a nice job," Stoops said. "He's been very solid and he's going to be a nice little wrinkle for us."

emphasis on special teams in the spring. "There's some change. ... They did some good things on special teams here last year and if it's not broke, don't fix it."

UK returns punter Landon Foster, who earned Freshman All-America honors averaging 42.9 yards a punt. Senior Joe Mansour, who handled kickoffs, is back again this year and will compete with incoming star freshman kicker Austin MacGinnis for place-kicking duties.

What Peveto called a "stable of returners" have been looked at, most notably Demarco Robinson, Daryl Collins and DeMarcus Sweat.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

After a 2-10 season last year, it's hard to imagine that Kentucky's record could get much worse, but the schedule offers the Cats no help. They could end up with a slate rated among the toughest in the nation, with games against at least five teams likely to be ranked in the top 15.

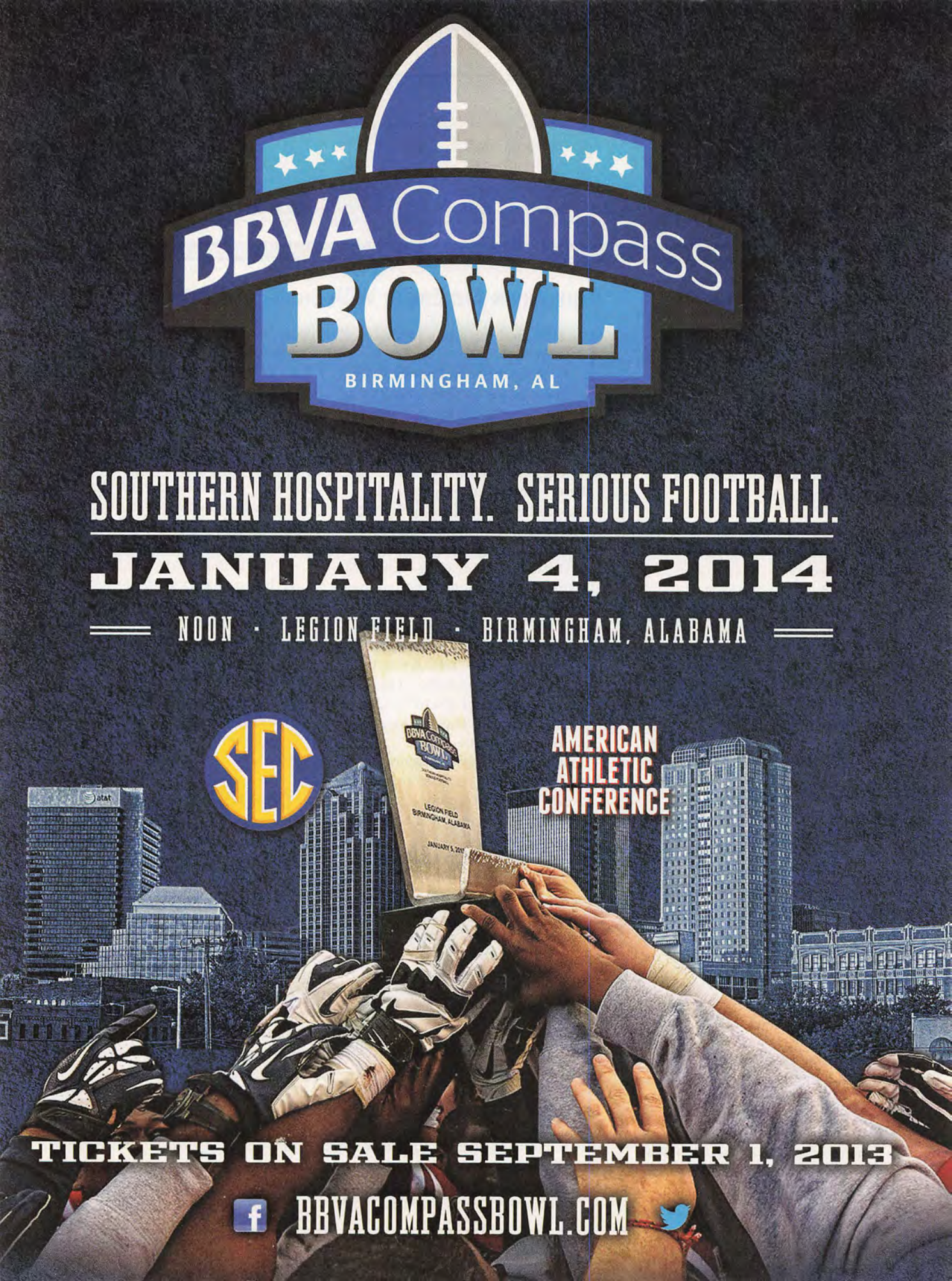
UK starts on the road in Nashville (at LP Field) against Western Kentucky and new coach Bobby Petrino, and it will get one tune-up game at home before starting a murder's row of four straight games against potential top 10 teams: Louisville, Florida, at South Carolina and then defending national champ Alabama.

Toss in road games at Mississippi State and Vanderbilt, which both went to bowl games last season, and then a final road trip to Georgia. Kentucky will have its hands beyond full.

— Jennifer Smith

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	vs. Western Kentucky	7-6
Sept. 7	MIAMI (OH)	4-8
Sept. 14	LOUISVILLE	11-2
Sept. 28	FLORIDA	11-2
Oct. 5	at South Carolina	11-2
Oct. 12	ALABAMA	13-1
Oct. 24	at Mississippi State	8-5
Nov. 2	ALABAMA STATE	7-4
Nov. 9	MISSOURI	5-7
Nov. 16	at Vanderbilt	9-4
Nov. 23	at Georgia	12-2
Nov. 30	TENNESSEE	5-7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LSU TIGERS

For more coverage of the Tigers, visit lsu.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Cam Cameron | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Chavis** | **STADIUM: Tiger Stadium: 92,400**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
10-3 overall, 6-2 SEC (2nd, West)

COACH:
Les Miles — At LSU: 85-21, 8 years; overall: 113-42, 12 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
9; 6 offense, 3 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Zach Mettenberger, RB Jeremy Hill, WR Odell Beckham Jr., OT La'el Collins, LB Lamar Barrow, S Craig Loston

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
A bevy of backs gives the Tigers enough gas in the tank seemingly to run forever. New offensive coordinator Cam Cameron has a reliable quarterback to work with in Mettenberger, an accomplished receiving tandem in Beckham and Jarvis Landry, and a physical line that embodies LSU's style of play.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
A depleted defense must construct a new line, and the linebacking corps lost the team's leading tackler. The secondary must avoid the injuries that hampered it in the past or run the risk of relying on suspect depth. Replacing a placekicker and punter only adds to the uncertainty.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Michael Ford, DE Barkevious Mingo, DE Sam Montgomery, LB Kevin Minter, PK Drew Alleman

OVERVIEW:
Blessed as usual with abundant athletic ability, LSU must harness it, particularly on offense, to compensate for a revamped defense that could take time to come into its own. Cameron has plenty of talent at his disposal; it's just a matter of stamping his identity on a unit that certainly could use one. Two late-game losses in 2012 beg for the need to finish strong.

Transitions Are Easier With Loads of Talent

LSU is nothing if not a team in transition.

From the arrival of offensive coordinator Cam Cameron, late of the Baltimore Ravens, to the departure of a school-record 11 players who left early for the NFL Draft, the Tigers are in search of a new identity.

This comes on the heels of a 10-3 season, with two major disappointments tempering the fact that coach Les Miles produced his third consecutive double-digit win total, his sixth in eight years at LSU.

Hardest to accept was the late-game collapse against eventual national champion Alabama. The Crimson Tide roared 72 yards on their last drive to score the winning touchdown with 51 seconds left. Thus, LSU was unable to atone for its miserable loss to Alabama in the 2011 national championship game.

Adding to the Tigers' chagrin was their one-point loss to Clemson in the Chick-fil-A Bowl in which the game-winning points were scored on a field goal as time expired.

It was a bitter end to a year flawed even before it began when popular junior cornerback Tyrann Mathieu was dismissed from the team for violation of the LSU's substance abuse policy for athletes. Mathieu joined 10 former teammates, including two highly prized defensive ends, in opting for the NFL Draft rather than continuing his college career.

In addition to Mathieu, Barkevious Mingo and Sam Montgomery, Miles must replace four other defensive starters. Never one to back away from a challenge, Miles relishes the opportunity to prove he deserves the postseason raise that elevated his annual salary to $4.3 million.

"This is the style of team that if they work hard and do the things they are capable of doing they will ... compete for a title," said Miles, whose team won the national championship in 2007. "That is always the mark here and will certainly always be."

Sometimes the realization of that goal takes more dedication and focus, and this may well be a season in which such traits are in demand. No less than Cameron and defensive coordinator John Chavis expect their players to deliver.

"We're going to get there," said Chavis, who didn't guarantee overnight success, but promised to provide LSU with "a good defense."

As for Cameron, he's charged with bringing stability to an LSU offense often uneven in its production. Entrusted with more veterans than his defensive counterpart, Cameron said he has "a great foundation" with which to work.

OFFENSE

The Tigers will have a look of familiarity to them if only for all the experienced players who return, including nine starters. Senior quarterback Zach Mettenberger is back for his second year as a starter after throwing for 2,609 yards and 12 touchdowns with just seven interceptions last season.

While Mettenberger must learn a new system under LSU's third coordinator in four years, Cameron said he wants to play to Mettenberger's strengths and "do everything that he can do well." Mettenberger helped himself with his decision-making last season in setting a school record with a 50:1 ratio of passes to interceptions for quarterbacks with at least 300 passing attempts.

As much as the Tigers may rely on the pass, Miles at his core has always favored a strong running attack and has

Alfred Blue
Photo by Derick E. Hingle-US PRESSWIRE

a fleet of experienced and talented runners at his disposal.

Sophomore Jeremy Hill leads the cast after rushing 142 times for a team-high 755 yards and 12 touchdowns last season. Hill managed to post such numbers while making just five starts and playing in 11 of LSU's 13 games.

Junior Kenny Hilliard was second to Hill in rushing yards and touchdowns with 464 yards and six scores. The bruising Hilliard also has shown the versatility to play fullback. After a knee injury sidelined him for most of last season, senior Alfred Blue hopes to expand upon the 270 yards and three touchdowns he registered through three starts. Senior fullback J.C. Copeland adds reliability.

In addition to depth, Miles said he anticipates Hilliard becoming "a dominant player" and Hill "achieving a lot. I wouldn't be surprised if he becomes an elite back."

Miles said the line should "have a lot of quality on it" despite having to replace a three-year starter at center. Junior Elliott Porter appears to be the heir apparent after a backup role last season.

Junior La'el Collins is likely headed to left tackle after starting every game at left guard last season. Sophomore Vadal Alexander returns as the other starting tackle. Junior guard Josh Williford is fully recovered from a concussion that allowed sophomore guard Trai Turner to gain valuable experience last season.

Junior Odell Beckham Jr. and Jarvis Landry give the Tigers the potential for an accomplished receiving tandem depending on how much use LSU makes of its wide receivers. Despite only one start, Landry led LSU in receptions (56) and touchdown catches (five) while playing every game.

Beckham, who started all but one game, followed with 43 catches for a team-high 713 yards and two touchdowns. Senior Kadron Boone caught four touchdown receptions and adds to LSU's arsenal through the air. Junior Travis Dickson complements the receiving corps at tight end.

DEFENSE

Senior linebacker Lamin Barrow figures to be the centerpiece of a depleted defense both figuratively and literally. Barrow, who may move from weakside to the middle, will be looked upon for his leadership as much as his performance as one of four returning starters.

Barrow is the top returning tackler with 104 stops that included 7.5 tackles for loss. He also recovered two fumbles and forced another. For all his past deeds, Barrow finally will have the opportunity to escape the shadow of Kevin Minter, who vacated the position Barrow most likely will fill.

That's assuming sophomore D.J. Welter won't be in the middle. Welter

Jeremy Hill
Photo by John Williamson

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Zach Mettenberger*	Sr.	Threw for at least 200 yards in final four regular-season games.	Anthony Jennings, Fr.
RB	Jeremy Hill	So.	First true freshman to lead LSU in rushing since 2003.	Alfred Blue, Sr.
RB	J.C. Copeland*	Sr.	Made transition from defense to offense look relatively easy.	Connor Neighbors, Sr.
WR	Odell Beckham Jr.*	Jr.	Caught pass in 25 of 27 career games, including all 13 in 2012.	Travin Dural, Fr.
WR	Jarvis Landry	Jr.	Made spectacular, one-handed 22-yard TD catch vs. Arkansas.	Kadron Boone, Sr.
TE	Travis Dickson	Jr.	Upholding family tradition as older brother once manned the position.	Dillon Gordon, So.
LT	La'el Collins*	Jr.	Led team in total snaps (836) and knockdowns (64.5) from guard spot.	Jerald Hawkins, Fr.
LG	Josh Williford	Sr.	Missed much of season recovering from effects of concussion.	Ethan Pocic, Fr.
C	Elliott Porter	Jr.	Former Kentucky signee to become first new starter in four years.	Josh Williford, Sr.
RG	Trai Turner*	So.	Established himself after Williford's injury gave Turner opportunity.	Fehoko Fanaika, Jr.
RT	Vadal Alexander*	So.	Made Freshman All-SEC Team, Freshman All-America second team.	Jerald Hawkins, Fr.
PK	James Hairston	Jr.	Kicked off 149 times the last two years, but has yet to try a place-kick.	Colby Delahoussaye, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Jermauria Rasco	Jr.	Played in every game last year; 10 tackles and a forced fumble.	Danielle Hunter, So.
DT	Anthony Johnson	Jr.	Most experienced member of the Tigers' new-look front four.	Mickey Johnson, So.
DT	Ego Ferguson	Jr.	Played one of his best games in the Chick-fil-A Bowl.	Quentin Thomas, So.
DE	Danielle Hunter	So.	Joins Johnson and Ferguson as the only lineman to have seen action.	Jordan Allen, Jr.
LB	D.J. Welter	Jr.	Played his way into lineup with postseason and spring performances.	Tahj Jones, Sr.
LB	Lamin Barrow*	Sr.	Season-high nine tackles, including two for losses, in Chick-fil-A Bowl.	Kwon Alexander, So.
LB	Lamar Louis	So.	Showed first-year promise in five starts; finished with 13 total tackles.	Deion Jones, So.
CB	Jalen Mills*	So.	Made immediate impact in finishing fourth on team with 57 total tackles.	Kavahra Holmes, Fr.
CB	Jalen Collins	So.	Made Coaches Freshman All-SEC Team with 30 tackles, two picks.	Dwayne Thomas, Fr.
SS	Craig Loston*	Sr.	Rare Tiger junior who didn't enter the NFL Draft after last year.	Micah Eugene, So.
FS	Ronald Martin	Jr.	Injuries to Loston allowed Martin to showcase his multi-faceted skills.	Corey Thompson, So.
P	Jamie Keehn	So.	From Australia, as was his predecessor; will turn 24 on Aug. 4.	Trent Domingue, Fr.

*Returning Starter

TIGERS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Tre'Davious White
White committed to LSU almost a year before he signed and never really waivered. He was a huge pickup for the Tigers and will look to follow in the footsteps of guys like Morris Claiborne and Patrick Peterson as the next great LSU cornerback. He certainly has the talent.

Frank Herron
Herron was almost unblockable in the U.S. Army All-American practices in January, and has the ability to play outside or inside for the Tigers. Herron can rush off the edge, but he can also slide down inside and hold his own with the bigger, stronger guards in the SEC.

Ethan Pocic
Rushing the passer and protecting the quarterback are two of the most important things a team must do in the SEC, and Pocic can definitely contribute to the latter. Pocic has elite size and athleticism, and he also possesses the strength and mean streak to be a dominant run blocker.

THE SLEEPER

K.J. MALONE
It's hard to imagine the son of NBA Hall of Famer Karl Malone as a sleeper, but in class loaded with five- and four-stars, the three-star OL will do. K.J. was rated as the 35th best offensive guard in the nation and as the 33rd best player in Louisiana by Rivals.com.

Committments	26
Average Stars	3.73
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	15
★★★☆☆	9
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	97
National Rank: 6	SEC: 3

2014 NEEDS: After not signing a running back in 2013 and losing a couple of ball carriers as early entries to the NFL Draft, LSU will aim to bring in at least two prospects at the position in this class. In addition to running back, the Tigers will also look to bring in some top prospects at linebacker. Safety is another position to keep an eye on as LSU signed four defensive backs but none that will start out at safety.

by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Maquedius Bain	DT	6-5	286	★★★	Fort Lauderdale, FL	University School
Under Armour All-American. Rated as the No. 41 defensive tackle prospect in the nation and the No. 74 overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com.						
Kendell Beckwith	ATH	6-3	225	★★★★	Jackson, LA	East Feliciana
Rivals100 selection and an Under Armour All-American. Rated as the No. 4 athlete in the nation and the No. 3 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Josh Boutte	OL	6-4	324	★★★★	New Iberia, LA	Westgate
Rivals250 selection and U.S. Army All-American. Rated as the No. 7 offensive tackle in the nation and the No. 5 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Tashawn Bower	DE	6-5	241	★★★★	Somerville, NJ	Immaculata
Rated as the No. 14 weakside defensive end in the nation and the No. 8 overall prospect in New Jersey by Rivals.com.						
Jeryl Brazil	DB	5-10	181	★★★★	Loranger, LA	Loranger
Rivals250 selection and Under Armour All-American. Rated as the No. 16 cornerback in the nation and as the No. 7 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
John Diarse	WR	6-1	205	★★★★	Monroe, LA	Neville
Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 31 wide receiver and as the No. 10 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Andy Dodd	OL	6-4	330	★★★★	Lindale, GA	Pepperell
Three-year starter in high school. Rated as the No. 13 offensive guard and as the No. 19 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Greg Gilmore	DT	6-4	275	★★★★	Hope Mills, NC	South View
Under Armour All-American and slected to play in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas. Rated as the No. 6 overall prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com.						
Frank Herron	DE	6-5	245	★★★★★	Memphis, TN	Central
U.S. Army All-American. Rated as the No. 3 strongside defensive end in the nation and the No. 2 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Rickey Jefferson	DB	6-0	187	★★★★	Destrehan, LA	Destrehan
Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 18 cornerback in the nation and as the No. 8 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Anthony Jennings	QB	6-2	205	★★★★	Marietta, GA	Marietta
Enrolled at LSU in January. MVP of Georgia Elite 11 camp. Rated as the No. 6 dual-threat quarterback in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Avery Johnson	WR	6-2	180	★★★	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy
Rated as the No. 11 overall prep school prospect in the country by Rivals.com. Enrolled at LSU in January.						
Melvin Jones	LB	6-3	245	★★★	Lake Charles, LA	Washington-Marion
Rushed for 1,208 yards and 14 touchdowns and had 145 tackles, five sacks, and four interceptions in 2011. Rated as the No. 23 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Christian Lacouture	DE	6-5	290	★★★	Lincoln, NE	Lincoln Southwest
Had 98 tackles and 14 tackles for loss in 2012. Rated as the No. 18 strongside defensive end and the No. 2 overall prospect in Nebraska by Rivals.com.						
Quantavius Leslie	WR	6-4	191	★★★★	Raymond, MS	Hinds C.C.
Rated as the No. 12 overall JC prospect in the nation by Rivals.com. Had 517 yards receiving and seven touchdowns in 2012.						
K.J. Malone	OL	6-3	307	★★★	Ruston, LA	Cedar Creek
Three-year starter. Rated as the No. 35 offensive guard in the nation and as the No. 33 player in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Lewis Neal	DE	6-1	234	★★★	Wilson, NC	Hunt
Rated as the No. 22 weakside defensive in in the nation and as the No. 11 overall prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com.						
Michael Patterson	DE	6-2	218	★★★	Winnfield, LA	Winnfield Senior
Rated as the No. 17 weakside defensive end in the nation and as the No. 14 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Ethan Pocic	OL	6-7	285	★★★★	Lemont, IL	Lemont
Under Armour All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the No. 4 offensive tackle in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Hayden Rettig	QB	6-4	210	★★★★	Los Angeles, CA	Cathedral
U.S. Army All-American and enrolled at LSU in January. Rated as the No. 3 pro-style quarterback in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Duke Riley	LB	6-1	215	★★★	River Ridge, LA	John Curtis
Rated as the No. 45 outside linebacker in the nation and as the No. 28 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Rashard Robinson	DB	6-1	163	★★★★	Pompano Beach, FL	Blanche Ely
Rated as the No. 26 cornerback in the nation and as the No. 45 overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com. A two year starter.						
DeSean Smith	TE	6-4	226	★★★★	Lake Charles, LA	Barbe
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the No. 2 tight end in the nation and No. 2 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Kevin Spears	WR	6-3	190	★★★★	New Orleans, LA	Holy Cross
Rated as the No. 43 wide receiver in the nation and as the No. 13 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Logan Stokes	TE	6-4	240	★★★	Booneville, MS	Northeast Mississippi C.C.
Had 10 catches for 80 yards in 2012 in five games. Originally from Muscle Shoals, Alabama.						
Tre-Davious White	DB	5-10	170	★★★★★	Shreveport, LA	Green Oaks
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the No. 4 cornerback in the nation and as the top overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						

TIGERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
25	Kwon Alexander	LB	6-2	215	So.	Oxford, AL
78	Vadal Alexander	OT	6-6	350	So.	Buford, GA
98	Jordan Allen	DE	6-6	253	Jr.	West Monroe
71	Jonah Austin	OT	6-6	329	So.	New Orleans
	Maquedius Bain	DT	6-5	286	Fr.	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
57	Lamin Barrow	LB	6-2	232	Sr.	Marrero
3	Odell Beckham, Jr.	WR	6-0	187	Jr.	New Orleans
	Kendell Beckwith	LB	6-3	225	Fr.	Jackson
4	Alfred Blue	RB	6-2	220	Sr.	Boutte
1	Rob Bolden	QB	6-4	208	Jr.	Orchard Lake, MI
86	Kadron Boone	WR	6-0	207	Sr.	Ocala, FL
53	Logan Boudreaux	SNP	5-11	215	So.	St. Amant
	Josh Boutte	OL	6-4	324	Fr.	New Iberia
	Tashawn Bower	DE	6-5	241	Fr.	Somerville, NJ
	Jeryl Brazil	ATH	5-9	181	Fr.	Loranger
32	Jalen Collins	CB	6-2	195	So.	Olive Branch, MS
70	La'el Collins	OL	6-5	321	Jr.	Baton Rouge
44	J.C. Copeland	FB	6-1	272	Sr.	LaGrange, GA
34	Michael Davis	FB	5-9	187	Fr.	Prairieville
30	Colby Delahoussaye	PK	5-10	174	Fr.	New Iberia
88	John Diarse	WR	6-1	205	Fr.	Monroe
41	Travis Dickson	TE	6-3	230	Jr.	Ocean Springs, MS
	Andy Dodd	OL	6-3	330	Fr.	Lindale, GA
30	Trent Domingue	PK/P	6-0	177	Fr.	Mandeville
83	Travin Dural	WR	6-2	180	Fr.	Breaux Bridge
66	Derek Edinburgh, Jr.	OT	6-8	316	Fr.	New Orleans
34	Micah Eugene	S	5-11	190	So.	Lafayette
69	Fehoko Fanaika	OG	6-6	340	Jr.	Sacramento, CA
56	Andrew Farris	LB	6-0	210	Fr.	Shreveport
22	Ronnie Feist	LB	6-2	230	So.	Edgard
9	Ego Ferguson	DT	6-3	308	Jr.	Mims, FL
50	Reid Ferguson	SNP	6-2	235	So.	Buford, GA
5	Jarrett Fobbs	WR	5-11	188	Jr.	Shreveport
48	Seth Fruge	LB	5-11	189	Sr.	Welsh
27	Matthew Gibson	DB	6-0	184	Fr.	Baton Rouge
	Greg Gilmore	DT	6-4	275	Fr.	Hope Mills, NC
85	Dillon Gordon	TE	6-5	280	So.	River Ridge
51	Trey Granier	LB	6-1	227	Fr.	Thibodaux
30	James Hairston	PK	6-1	220	Jr.	Dallas, TX
55	Jarrett Hardnett	LB	6-1	233	Sr.	Baton Rouge
65	Jerald Hawkins	OT	6-6	300	Fr.	Baldwin
	Frank Herron	DE	6-5	245	Fr.	Memphis, TN
33	Jeremy Hill	RB	6-2	235	So.	Baton Rouge
27	Kenny Hilliard	RB	6-0	231	Jr.	Patterson
36	Kavahra Holmes	CB	6-2	180	Fr.	Breaux Bridge
94	Danielle Hunter	DL	6-5	235	So.	Katy, TX
	Rickey Jefferson	DB	5-10	187	Fr.	Destrehan
10	Anthony Jennings	QB	6-2	205	Fr.	Marietta, GA
90	Anthony Johnson	DT	6-3	304	Jr.	New Orleans
87	Jordan Johnson	WR	5-8	184	Sr.	Friendswood, TX
96	Mickey Johnson	DT	6-0	306	So.	Covington
91	A'Trey-U Jones	DT	6-0	282	Sr.	Tickfaw
45	Deion Jones	LB	6-2	202	So.	New Orleans
	Melvin Jones	LB	6-3	245	Fr.	Lake Charles
58	Tahj Jones	LB	6-2	205	Sr.	Sulphur
28	Jonathan Juneau	RB	5-11	198	Fr.	Lafayette
38	Jamie Keehn	P	6-4	222	So.	Miners Rest, AUS
16	Brad Kragthorpe	QB	6-0	186	So.	Tulsa, OK
13	Chris LaBorde	WR	6-1	185	So.	Lafayette
91	Christian LaCouture	DT	6-5	290	Fr.	Lincoln, NE
80	Jarvis Landry	WR	6-1	195	Jr.	Convent
89	Jeffrey Lang	WR	5-11	188	Jr.	Benton
52	Gabe Langlois	OG	6-2	310	So.	Prairieville
29	Tommy LeBeau	S	6-1	190	So.	Monroe
53	Grant Leger	LB	6-1	215	So.	Metairie
	Quantavius Leslie	WR	6-4	190	Jr.	Hogansville, GA
6	Craig Loston	S	6-2	205	Sr.	Houston, TX
23	Lamar Louis	LB	6-0	220	So.	Breaux Bridge
54	Justin Maclin	DE	6-4	237	Jr.	Memphis, TN
14	Terrence Magee	RB	5-9	212	Jr.	Franklinton
	K.J. Malone	OL	6-3	307	Fr.	Ruston
26	Ronald Martin	S	6-1	202	Jr.	White Castle
8	Zach Mettenberger	QB	6-5	230	Sr.	Watkinsville, GA
35	Devante Meullion	FB	5-10	240	So.	Seattle, WA
28	Jalen Mills	CB	6-0	185	So.	DeSoto, TX
46	Charles Mitchell	TE	6-1	200	Jr.	Sugar Land, TX
	Lewis Neal	DE	6-1	234	Fr.	Wilson, NC
43	Connor Neighbors	FB	5-11	236	Sr.	Huntsville, AL
17	Myles O'Brien	LB	6-2	210	Jr.	Metairie
	M.J. Patterson	DE	6-2	218	Fr.	Winnfield
56	Logan Patty	LB	6-0	216	Fr.	Baton Rouge
2	Avery Peterson	WR	6-1	180	Fr.	Pompano Beach, FL
42	Michael Petty	LB	5-10	185	So.	Alexandria
35	Lorenzo Phillips	LB	6-2	215	Fr.	Patterson
52	Christian Pittman	LB	6-0	205	So.	New Orleans
77	Ethan Pocic	OL	6-7	285	Fr.	Lemont, IL
55	Elliott Porter	C	6-4	300	Jr.	Waggaman
59	Jermauria Rasco	DE	6-3	255	Jr.	Shreveport
19	Derrick Raymond	CB	6-1	175	Fr.	New Orleans
11	Hayden Rettig	QB	6-2	201	Fr.	Los Angeles, CA
	Duke Riley	LB	6-1	205	Fr.	New Orleans
17	Stephen Rivers	QB	6-8	225	So.	Athens, AL
	Rashard Robinson	DB	6-1	163	Fr.	Pompano Beach, FL
39	Jerqwinick Sandolph	DB	6-2	190	So.	Boutte
29	Stephen Scardina	FB	5-11	272	Fr.	Baton Rouge
	DeSean Smith	TE	6-4	226	Fr.	Lake Charles
	Kevin Spears	WR	6-3	190	Fr.	New Orleans
84	Logan Stokes	TE	6-5	253	Jr.	Muscle Shoals, AL
21	Tre' Sullivan	DB	5-9	182	Jr.	Donaldsonville
13	Dwayne Thomas	CB	6-0	175	Fr.	New Orleans
95	Quentin Thomas	DT	6-3	294	So.	Breaux Bridge
12	Corey Thompson	S	6-2	210	So.	Missouri City, TX
57	Cody Townsend	OL	6-1	283	Fr.	Marrero
56	Trai Turner	OL	6-3	306	So.	New Orleans
75	Evan Washington	OG	6-6	324	Jr.	DeSoto, TX
31	D.J. Welter	LB	6-0	226	Jr.	Crowley
67	Adam White	OL	6-0	260	So.	Baton Rouge
	Tre'Davious White	DB	5-10	170	Fr.	Shreveport
81	Armand Williams	WR	6-3	200	Jr.	Slidell
74	Josh Williford	OG	6-7	332	Sr.	Dothan, AL
82	James Wright	WR	6-2	203	Sr.	Belle Chasse

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
Z. Mettenberger	13	128.3	207	352	7	58.8	2609	12	56	200.7
S. Rivers	4	0.0	0	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Landry	13	56	573	10.2	5	33	44.1
O. Beckham, Jr.	13	43	713	16.6	2	56	54.8
K. Boone	13	26	348	13.4	4	34	26.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Hill	11	142	775	20	755	5.3	12	57	68.6
K. Hilliard	12	82	477	13	464	5.7	6	71	38.7
M. Ford	13	71	399	7	392	5.5	3	22	30.2

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: K. Minter 130, L. Barrow 104, E. Reid 91
Tackles for loss: K. Minter 15, S. Montgomery 13, A. Johnson 10
Sacks: S. Montgomery 8, B. Mingo 4.5, L. Edwards 4.5
Interceptions: T. Simon 4, C. Loston 3, four tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

New offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach **Cam Cameron** and **Les Miles** have been friends since they coached together at Michigan from 1987-93. Miles also was an offensive lineman for the Wolverines from 1974-75.

"It is an opportunity of a lifetime to work with people you care about," Cameron said. "There is no downside in my mind because the relationship trumps everything. For me and my family, it doesn't get any better than this."

Cameron has served in multiple capacities throughout college and the NFL, most recently as offensive coordinator of the Super Bowl champion Baltimore Ravens.

Cameron was dismissed after Week 14 of the regular season, but is generally regarded as having helped develop Super Bowl MVP quarterback Joe Flacco.

Cameron will be one of the SEC's highest-paid offensive coordinators, making $600,000 this season, $1.3 million in 2014 and $1.5 million in 2015.

• **Greg Studrawa**, who spent the last two years as offensive coordinator and offensive line coach, will coach the line only.

Studrawa became coordinator after **Steve Kragthorpe** was stricken with Parkinson's Disease.

Kragthorpe, Louisville's former head coach, was retained in an administrative capacity.

• Junior quarterback **Rob Bolden** missed spring practice with a knee injury. Junior defensive end **Justin Maclin** was held out with an unspecified ailment.

Bolden, a Michigan native, redshirted last season after transferring from Penn State. In two seasons for the Nittany Lions, Bolden started 15 of the 20 games in which he played.

• Freshman defensive back **Rickey Jefferson**, the brother of former quarterback Jordan Jefferson, was arrested four days before he signed with LSU last February.

The Jefferson Parish Sherriff's Office arrested Jefferson and charged him with resisting arrest by violence. A detective was attempting to arrest another teenager at a Mardi Gras parade when Jefferson intervened.

Before the start of spring practice, coach Les Miles said he didn't know of Jefferson's arrest when he signed and wouldn't comment until given more information.

Jordan Jefferson, who played arena football this past season, has had his troubles with the law. He was suspended before the 2011 season for his part in a fight outside a bar.

The elder Jefferson and former LSU defensive back Tyrann Mathieu were arrested on drug-related charges last October.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On QB Zach Mettenberger:** "A lot of LSU's success will rest with Mettenberger, how well he develops and comes along. If he does, they're probably the best team in the West. They will have enough weapons around Mettenberger. They were in a shell for so long offensively, and being in a shell cost them in the bowl game (against Clemson). They weren't hard to defend."

• **On the talent level:** "LSU is always going to be LSU because of the fertile recruiting ground they have. But when 11 juniors come out early for the draft that will affect your depth and maturity — not necessarily talent, but depth and maturity. ... Year in and year out, they've got really good talent. They're the best-looking team, if you line 'em up and look at them physically."

Lamin Barrow
Photo by John Williamson

manned the spot throughout the spring after missing all but the Chick-fil-A Bowl because of academic suspension. Sophomore Lamar Louis, a starter at strongside last season, remains in contention for the middle, as well.

Coordinator John Chavis said a final decision may not be made until August, which isn't all that surprising from a group Miles said "may be one of the more talented ... on our team."

The situation looks somewhat more stable across the line where juniors Anthony Johnson and Ego Ferguson are earmarked as the starting tackles. Fully one-third of Johnson's 30 total tackles last year were tackles for loss, as he returns as the top producer in that category. Three of Ferguson's 14 total tackles came against Clemson in the Chick-fil-A Bowl.

LSU lost 75 total tackles, from the two ends who left early for the NFL Draft. The hope is that junior Jamauria Rasco and sophomore Danielle Hunter can make up some of the difference.

Rasco, who played in every game last season, totaled 10 tackles with two tackles for loss and a forced fumble. Hunter, who played in all but one game, registered 12 stops, including three solo tackles.

In addition to having what will become a "real quality defense overall," Miles said LSU returns "some talent up front." Hunter, said Miles, "has great athletic ability ... We will train him with the idea that he will play a lot of football." Johnson and Ferguson are being counted upon as leaders, Miles said.

Senior safety Craig Loston headlines the secondary after having returned an interception for a 100-yard touchdown against Mississippi State last season. Loston also intercepted two other passes, recovered a fumble and made 55 total tackles.

Sophomore cornerback Jalen Mills started on the path to success with an effort that warranted inclusion on two All-SEC Freshman teams. In starting every game, he finished fourth on the team with 55 total tackles. He intercepted two passes, defended seven and broke up five more.

Sophomore cornerback Jalen Collins and junior safety Ronald Martin each added two picks, with Martin returning one for a 45-yard touchdown.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Odell Beckham Jr. will provide a recognizable face on what otherwise is a unit that sports an almost entirely new look.

Beckham was among the SEC's best punt returners last year. He led the league in number of returns (35), ranked fourth in return yardage (320) and was seventh in yards per return

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Jeremy Hill

Can change the complexion of the game with one run. ... Set a school freshman record with 12 rushing touchdowns, one better than the old mark Dalton Hilliard set in 1982. ... Against Ole Miss became the first freshman to rush for three touchdowns in a game since Kevin Faulk in 1995. ... First true freshman to rush for more than 100 yards against Alabama. ... Had four 100-yard games, including 124 yards and two touchdowns against Clemson in the Chick-fil-A Bowl.

EMERGING STAR

LB Kwon Alexander

Showed promise as a freshman before breaking an ankle against Florida. ... Registered four tackles in first start against Towson. Followed that start against Florida with two tackles and a fumble recovery return of 15 yards before the injury. ... Returned for the bowl game, in which he recorded a tackle. ... Made college debut with two tackles and a fumble recovery against North Texas. ... Finished the season with 12 tackles, including one for a loss, a forced fumble and two fumble recoveries.

TOP NEWCOMER

LB Kendell Beckwith

Arguably the top prospect the state produced last season. ... The Class 3A Defensive MVP and a member of the Class 3A All-State team as chosen by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association. ... Winner of the 2012 Warrick Dunn Award and the WAFB Sportsline Player of the Year. ... His strength and athleticism make him a candidate to see action at defensive end, as well. ... Finished senior year at East Feliciana High School with 91 total tackles, including 17 quarterback sacks. Recovered two fumbles and forced two others.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.7	45
Rushing	185.7	28
Passing	155.6	107
Total	341.3	86
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.2	11
Rushing	137.3	42
Passing	169.9	10
Total	307.2	12
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 8	+ 0.62	22

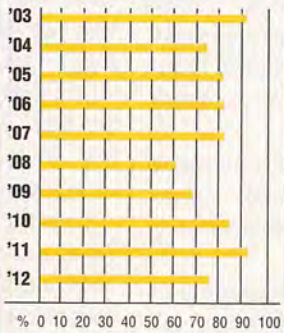
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	35.7	17
Rushing	202.6	22
Passing	152.5	106
Total	355.1	86
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	11.3	2
Rushing	90.1	5
Passing	171.4	8
Total	261.5	2
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 20	+ 1.43	2

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.8	58
Rushing	173.7	50
Passing	200.5	92
Total	374.2	85
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	17.5	12
Rushing	101.6	9
Pass	206.0	28
Total	307.6	8
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+16	+ 1.23	Tie/5

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

	10-3, 6-2	
W	NORTH TEXAS	41-14
W	WASHINGTON	41-3
W	IDAHO	63-14
W	at Auburn	12-10
W	TOWSON	38-22
L	at Florida	6-14
W	SOUTH CAROLINA	23-21
W	at Texas A&M	24-19
L	ALABAMA	17-21
W	MISSISSIPPI STATE	37-17
W	OLE MISS	41-35
W	at Arkansas	20-13
	Chick-fil-A Bowl	
L	vs. Clemson	24-25

PLAYER PROFILE

Zach Mettenberger
Photo by Derick E. Hingle-US PRESSWIRE

The Pressure To Win Is All He Really Needs

The last time LSU offensive coordinator Cam Cameron coached a team with Philip Rivers as a backup quarterback, the starter was on his way to an NFL Hall of Fame career.

Not that LSU senior quarterback Zach Mettenberger needs added pressure, but if he can, in any way, approach what Drew Brees did with the San Diego Chargers, the Tigers will be in good hands this season.

For that matter, if Mettenberger can emulate Philip Rivers, who replaced Brees when he left for the New Orleans Saints before the 2006 season, LSU should become a major offensive force.

Cameron, though, isn't asking Mettenberger to try and copy two of Cameron's most notable disciples who benefitted from his tutelage as San Diego's offensive coordinator from 2002-2006.

That also goes for LSU sophomore backup quarterback Stephen Rivers, Philip's younger brother. Rather, Cameron wants Mettenberger to be himself.

"Figuring out what he likes most is one of the first things we are doing in this system," said Cameron, who was hired at LSU in the offseason. "I need to get some of the whys from him, and especially at this time in his career, do everything that he can do well."

Mettenberger showed a penchant for solid decision-making, if lacking for flair through the air, in his first year as a starter.

His number of completions (207) and passing yardage (2,609) were fifth-best in school history, with his attempts ranking fourth (352). He threw only seven interceptions, a much-needed trait given that LSU can ill-afford to turn over the ball to an untested defense.

For his part, Mettenberger has studied Cameron's offensive strategy as best he can and hopes to put it to good use when LSU opens against TCU on Aug. 31 in the Cowboys Classic.

"I'm just trying to learn a new system," he said of what the bulk of his spring entailed. Beyond that, Mettenberger wants to take on a more assertive role in more ways than one.

"I'm just trying to be a leader of this offense and team," he said. "It's all about winning for me. ... I'm going to go out there and do the best of my ability to get the win for us."

Brees and Philip Rivers have excelled at that. For as much as Cameron wants Mettenberger to be his own man, Cameron knows even a hint of such success can go a long way.

(9.1). He returned a career-high 89-yarder for a touchdown against Ole Miss.

Beckham and fellow wide receiver Jarvis Landry combined to return nine kickoffs for 56 yards.

Punter Jamie Keehn, a sophomore from Australia, showed himself to be more than capable of replacing countryman Brad Wing after averaging 44.6 yards on nine punts in place of Wing in the Chick-fil-A Bowl.

Junior kickoff specialist James Hairston will now handle place-kicking duties, as well.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

For the second time in three years, LSU will open the season in the Cowboys Classic when it faces TCU on Aug. 31 in Arlington, Texas. The Tigers can only hope the results are similar to 2011 when they beat Oregon en route to a perfect regular season.

Numerous obstacles stand in the Tigers' way, including road dates with defending SEC East champion Georgia on Sept. 28 and defending national champion Alabama on Nov. 9.

LSU welcomes Florida on Oct. 12 after the Gators topped the Tigers in Gainesville, giving them the first of their two conference losses.

Open dates surround the Alabama game before LSU ends its regular season with home games against stubborn Texas A&M on Nov. 23 and Arkansas on Nov. 30.

— Dave Moormann

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	vs. TCU (Arlington)	7-6
Sept. 7	UAB	3-9
Sept. 14	KENT STATE	11-3
Sept. 21	AUBURN	3-9
Sept. 28	at Georgia	12-2
Oct. 5	at Mississippi State	8-5
Oct. 12	FLORIDA	11-2
Oct. 19	at Ole Miss	7-6
Oct. 26	FURMAN	3-8
Nov. 9	at Alabama	13-1
Nov. 23	TEXAS A&M	11-2
Nov. 30	ARKANSAS	4-8

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OLE MISS REBELS

For more coverage of the Rebels, visit olemiss.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Dan Werner, Matt Luke | DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Dave Wommack, Jason Jones | STADIUM: Vaught-Hemingway Stadium: 60,580

AT A GLANCE

2012:
7-6 overall, 3-5 SEC (5th, West)

COACH:
Hugh Freeze — At Ole Miss: 7-6, 1 year; overall: 37-13, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
16; 8 offense, 8 defense.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Bo Wallace, RB Jeff Scott, WR Donte Moncrief, DE Robert Nkemdiche, DE C.J. Johnson, DT Issac Gross, LB Denzel Nkemdiche, S Cody Prewitt

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
With all the key playmakers returning on offense plus a handful of touted freshmen, Wallace should lead a potent attack that can win shootouts. On defense, Ole Miss will remain a smaller unit, but also one capable of aggressive schemes that deliver big plays in key situations.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Ole Miss still does not have enough SEC-level players to match most of its conference opposition, and even just a handful of injuries could be devastating (particularly at quarterback). The Rebels also lack a true No. 1 back and will count on freshman Robert Nkemdiche to be the elite pass-rusher they lack.

KEY LOSSES:
RB/WR Randall Mackey, TE Ferbia Allen, RG A.J. Hawkins, DT Gilbert Pena

OVERVIEW:
Ole Miss surprised everyone by winning six regular-season games and going to the BBVA Compass Bowl in the first year under Freeze (who then signed a top-five recruiting class). That's made expectations sky-high in Oxford. Maybe Ole Miss is able to take that next step and win 8 to 10 games. But only a couple of bad breaks could lead to a team struggling to win six.

Ole Miss Learning Success Leads to Big Expectations

Everything, and everyone, says Ole Miss is ready to take the next step in 2013 and become a true team to fear within the SEC.

That's what happens when you win seven games, return 16 starters (including the leading passer, rusher and top three receivers, as well as all the top defensive playmakers) and sign a top-five recruiting class centered around the nation's No. 1 overall prospect/defensive end, No. 1 wide receiver and No. 1 offensive tackle.

All that happened in Year 1 under coach Hugh Freeze, and he's already worried that his team's surprising success (most had the Rebels pegged as a four-win team, at most, in 2012) will make people believe that they're ready for something they just are not. Those who watched the team in the spring saw a roster that was still not deep enough to realistically contend with the SEC powers week-to-week.

"I told everyone, people — we got to be realists," Freeze said.

"We're still a little ways away from having the depth for this league. We were so fortunate last year. We played three receivers pretty much the whole year, five offensive linemen pretty much the whole year. That's rare that happens.

"We're seeing it now in the spring where we get some injuries and it changes your team pretty fast. We're still a couple of recruiting years away from having the depth that you really need at some of these spots."

Ole Miss did not have the depth or overall talent, at least on paper, to really contend with any SEC team, yet it beat three of them and overwhelmed Pitt in the BBVA Compass Bowl. In their losses, the Rebels lost fourth-quarter leads against LSU (in Baton Rouge), Texas A&M and Vanderbilt. The bottom line is that Freeze got the Rebels to play better than they were because he made them believe in him, and each other.

"Almost everybody has bought into coach Freeze's philosophy," senior linebacker Mike Marry said.

In a lot of ways, Freeze may feel like a victim of his own success. But the man has won everywhere he's been, from high school to NAIA to the Sun Belt to the SEC. There's a reason for that (including an up-tempo offense and trusting his defense to savvy veterans), which is why Ole Miss fans believe the best is yet to come.

OFFENSE

Ole Miss went into the last week of fall camp in 2012 not sure who its quarterback was, or how fast the offense could really go once the season started. Neither of those things are the case this time around.

Bo Wallace won the starting job, almost by default, but proved to be a far better player in games than he is in practice. He played three-quarters of the season with a shoulder injury that required offseason surgery, yet still ran the ball 143 times for eight touchdowns and completed 28 passes that went at least 40 yards. With him leading the offense, Ole Miss ran 962 plays. Only Texas A&M snapped the ball more in the SEC.

"He's not a real vocal guy, but I think everybody respects him," co-offensive coordinator Dan Werner said. "And you could see last year in games they wanted him in there and they felt confident at end of games that when he had the ball in his hand, he was going to make a play for them."

Any idea that Wallace's chemistry with his backs and receivers will suffer because he missed the spring rehab-

Donte Moncrief
Photo by Michael Wade

bing that shoulder has been quickly dismissed by coaches. Their reasoning: everyone is back.

Running back Jeff Scott has led the team in rushing the last two seasons, and he runs the read-option with Wallace beautifully. If he can learn to turn the corner and gain tough yards, Scott could be an All-SEC level back.

And then there are the receivers. Wallace to Donte Moncrief is the No. 1 option ("Feed Moncrief" was a huge hit by a local rap group), but Vince Sanders and Ja-Mes Logan are also back. And Ole Miss adds the nation's No. 1 receiver, Laquon Treadwell. That's four receivers, who will play together at times, from 6-1 to 6-3 and all at least 190 pounds.

"They better find a good defensive coordinator," Logan said of opponents.

The biggest question mark about the offense is up front. A handful of spring injuries exposed the Rebels' lack of depth along the offensive line, even though they return four starters. They signed four linemen in February, including No. 1 tackle Laremy Tunsil and No. 5 tackle Austin Golson, and may need all of them to be on the two-deep by the season opener.

Expect Tunsil and Golson to push left tackle Emmanuel McCray and right tackle Pierce Burton, both seniors, for playing time, but ultimately lose out to the veterans. Either freshman might then get a shot at right guard, battling senior Patrick Junen and sophomore Justin Bell.

"I think they do (play), but you don't ever know until you get 'em here, put the pads on and go to work," co-offensive coordinator Matt Luke said. "... The good news is that we have a lot coming back so if they don't, we'll be OK."

DEFENSE

On a December day, during the time of bowl practice when it's too soon to start worrying about the actual game so you fiddle and experiment and see how things look, defensive coordinator Dave Wommack was asked if any young backups had impressed him.

Wommack, who has been doing this for more than 30 years, kind of shook his head and laughed a knowing chuckle. Well, he said, he was under the impression that he was playing pretty much every underclassmen he had.

Wommack was not far from the truth. By the end of the season, there were 15 freshmen or sophomores on the defensive depth chart, including three true freshmen starters. They had performed well, for the most part — middle of the pack in total defense, leading the conference in tackles for loss (103) and second in sacks (38).

All of those underclassmen are back for 2013, which is why Wommack, who prefers multiple defensive sets that he

Jeff Scott
Photo by Michael Wade

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Bo Wallace*	Jr.	A gamer who earned the trust of his teammates last season.	Barry Brunetti, Sr.
RB	Jeff Scott*	Sr.	Speedy back has to learn how to get the tough yards.	I'Tavius Mathers, So.
WR	Donte Moncrief*	Jr.	Had 27 catches, 439 yards, five TDs in last four games.	Cody Core, So.
WR	Vince Sanders*	Jr.	Former top recruit is delivering on promise.	Laquon Treadwell, Fr.
WR	Ja-Mes Logan	Sr.	At 6-3, draws safety attention in the slot.	Korvic Neat, Sr.
TE	Christian Morgan	Fr.	The early enrollee has advantage for now.	Arshad Jackson, Fr.
LT	Emmanuel McCray*	Sr.	Devastating run-blocker as a junior.	Laremy Tunsil, Fr.
LG	Aaron Morris*	Jr.	Could be ready to make the leap to All-SEC level.	Jared Duke, Sr.
C	Evan Swindall*	Sr.	Coaches' kid does everything asked of him.	Austin Douglas, Jr.
RG	Patrick Junen	Sr.	Has a battle on his hands to keep job this fall.	Justin Bell, So.
RT	Pierce Burton*	Sr.	Should be more comfortable in year two in the SEC.	Austin Golson, Fr.
PK	Andrew Ritter	Sr.	Kickoff specialist who redshirted in order to play in 2013.	Andy Pappanastos, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	C.J. Johnson*	Jr.	Standout missed most of spring with a broken leg.	Carlos Thompson, Jr.
DT	Lavon Hooks	Jr.	Had 9.5 sacks, 20.5 TFLs at the junior college level.	Woodrow Hamilton, So.
DT	Issac Gross*	So.	Freshman All-American while playing at 254 pounds.	Bryon Bennett, Jr.
DE	Robert Nkemdiche	Fr.	No. 1 overall recruit will play immediately.	Cameron Whigham, Sr.*
LB	Mike Marry*	Sr.	Dependable, solid three-year starter who has increased speed.	D.T. Shackelford, Sr.
LB	Denzel Nkemdiche*	So.	Led team in every major category as a redshirt freshman.	Serderius Bryant, Jr.
CB	Charles Sawyer*	Sr.	Position leader has seven interceptions during 29 career starts.	Dehendret Collins, Sr.
CB	Senquez Golson	Jr.	Former two-sport standout is football-only now, better for it.	Nick Brassell, Jr.
S	Antonio Conner	Fr.	Five-star recruit should play hybrid S/LB position in 4-2-5.	Mike Hilton, So.
SS	Trae Elston*	So.	Huge hitter has already earned one suspension from the SEC.	Chief Brown, So.
FS	Cody Prewitt*	Jr.	Quiet but plays with rage, had 13 tackles against Alabama.	Quintavius Burdette, So.
P	Tyler Campbell	Sr.	All-SEC level punter that redshirted in 2012 to fix technique.	Chris Conley, Sr.

*Returning Starter

REBELS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Robert Nkemdiche
Nkemdiche was the No. 1 player in the country for almost every major recruiting site, and has an excellent chance to join his brother, Denzel, on the Rebels' defense in 2012. Nkemdiche can rush the passer and stop the run and has a body that is ready for the SEC now.

Laquon Treadwell
Ole Miss has to be excited to bring in a talent such as Treadwell at the receiver position opposite 2012 leading receiver Donte Moncrief. In Hugh Freeze's spread offense, Treadwell will be a playmaker who can take the top off of the defense and provide the Rebels with a big red zone target.

Laremy Tunsil
Tunsil is a freak athlete who runs like a tight end but has the strength of a guard. He has long arms and could develop into an elite pass protector. He will have an opportunity to play major snaps once he gets on campus and could be a three-year starter before playing on Sundays.

THE SLEEPER

Quadarias Mireles
Mireles should provide help to Ole Miss both on offense and also in the kicking game. Mireles' speed could be deadly in the slot, an area that was lacking for most of the 2012 season.

Committments	27
Average Stars	3.56
★★★★★	3
★★★★☆	9
★★★☆☆	15
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	96
National Rank: 7	SEC: 4

2014 NEEDS: The Rebels have a few needs in 2014 and most are on defense. Ole Miss brought in one defensive end, an elite one, but it will need to target a few others in the next class. The Rebels will also attempt to upgrade the talent at linebacker, where only two prospects were signed in 2013. Cornerback will be another point of emphasis of the staff. On offense, Ole Miss will be in the market for a couple of targets on the interior line.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Quincy Adeboyejo	WR	6-3	175	★★★★	Cedar Hill, TX	Cedar Hill
Rated as the No. 42 wide receiver in the nation and as the No. 43 overall prospect in Texas by Rivals.com.						
Trey Bledsoe	ATH	6-2	185	★★★	Grenada, MS	Grenada
Rated as the No. 19 overall prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com. Had 440 yards receiving and six touchdowns in 2012.						
Daronte Bouldin	OL	6-6	310	★★★	Canton, MS	Canton
A two-year starter. Rated as the No. 12 overall prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com. Chose the Rebels over offers from Tulane and Mississippi State.						
Nickolas Brassell	DB	6-1	180	★★★★	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
Rated as the fifth best overall JUCO prospect by Rivals.com. Played both ways at JUCO level and had 656 yards receiving and six touchdowns in 2012.						
Eugene Brazley	RB	5-10	175	★★★	New Orleans, LA	G W Carver
Rated as the No. 14 all-purpose back in the nation and as the No. 30 overall prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com.						
Ryan Buchanan	QB	6-3	210	★★★★	Jackson, MS	Jackson Prep
Rated as the No. 19 pro-style quarterback in the nation and as the third best overall prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com.						
Antonio Conner	DB	6-2	202	★★★★	Batesville, MS	South Panola
Under Armour All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the No. 11 safety prospect in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Mark Dodson Jr.	RB	5-10	193	★★★★	Memphis, TN	Whitehaven
Rated as the No. 6 all-purpose back in the nation and as the fourth best overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com. A Rivals250 selection.						
Evan Engram	TE	6-3	210	★★★	Powder Springs, GA	Hillgrove
Offensive MVP of the Cobb Senior Bowl in 2012. Rated as the No. 34 tight end in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Austin Golson	OL	6-6	284	★★★★	Prattville, AL	Prattville
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 8 offensive tackle prospect in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Bobby Hill	DB	6-0	163	★★★	Moultrie, GA	Colquitt County
A three-year starter for Colquitt County. Played on both sides of the ball. Chose Ole Miss over offers from South Florida and Kentucky.						
Lavon Hooks	DT	6-4	295	★★★★	Booneville, MS	Northeast Mississippi C.C.
Rated as the No. 2 overall JUCO prospect in the country and as the top JUCO defensive tackle by Rivals.com.						
Arshad Jackson	TE	6-6	239	★★★	Hampton, GA	Lovejoy
Selected to play in the Georgia Rising Seniors game in 2011. Rated as the No. 22 tight end in the nation by Rivals.com.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Davion Johnson	OL	6-4	315	★★★	Byhalia, MS	Byhalia
A three-year starter. Rated as the No. 16 overall prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com. Chose Ole Miss over Mississippi State.						
Derrick Jones	WR	6-2	179	★★★	Eupora, MS	Eupora
Rated as the No. 61 wide receiver in the nation and as the seventh best overall prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com.						
David Kamara	DB	5-11	185	★★★	Loganville, GA	Grayson
Rated as the No. 70 cornerback in the nation and as the No. 75 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Devante Kincade	QB	6-1	185	★★★	Dallas, TX	Skyline
Threw for 3,270 yards and 37 touchdowns in 2011. Rated as the No. 26 pro-style quarterback in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Quadarias Mireles	WR	5-11	185	★★★	Raymond, MS	Hinds C.C.
Had 47 carries for 249 yards and two touchdowns and 28 catches for 265 yards and two touchdowns in 2012.						
Herbert Moore	DT	6-1	335	★★★	Memphis, TN	Memphis East
Rated as the No. 53 defensive tackle in the nation and as the No. 16 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Kailo Moore	RB	5-10	180	★★★★	Rosedale, MS	West Bolivar
Rated as the No. 22 running back in the nation and as the fourth best overall prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com.						
Christian Morgan	TE	6-4	244	★★★	Plano, TX	Prestonwood Christian Academy
Rated as the No. 24 tight end in the nation and as the No. 85 overall prospect in Texas by Rivals.com.						
Robert Nkemdiche	DE	6-5	270	★★★★★	Loganville, GA	Grayson
Rated as the top overall prospect in the country and as the top strongside defensive end by Rivals.com. Under Armour All-American.						
Marcus Robinson	LB	6-4	207	★★★	Memphis, TN	Memphis East
Rated as the No. 26 outside linebacker and as the No. 14 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Rashawn Smith	LB	6-3	200	★★★	Florence, AL	Florence
A two-year starter and rated as No. 29 overall prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com. Chose Ole Miss over offers from Arkansas and Vanderbilt.						
Laquon Treadwell	WR	6-3	198	★★★★★	Crete, IL	Crete Monee
Rated as the nation's top wide receiver and as the top overall prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com. Under Armour All American.						
Laremy Tunsil	OL	6-6	295	★★★★★	Lake City, FL	Columbia
Rated as the top offensive tackle in the nation and as the second best overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com. U.S. Army All-American.						
Jordan Wilkins	RB	6-1	210	★★★★	Cordova, TN	St. Benedict
Rated as the No. 20 running back in the nation and as the ninth best overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						

REBELS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
16	Anthony Alford	DB	6-0	210	So.	Petal
73	Darone Bailey	OL	6-5	316	Jr.	Cleveland
29	Abdul Bangura	DB	5-10	176	So.	Takoma Park, MD
68	Justin Bell	OL	6-3	335	So.	Jackson
95	Bryon Bennett	DT	6-2	294	Jr.	Madison
35	Ontario Berry	DB	5-10	196	Jr.	Mendenhall
48	Justin Bigham	RB	6-1	232	Sr.	West Helena, AR
5	Nick Brassell	ATH	6-1	180	Jr.	Batesville
8	Chief Brown	DB	6-1	202	So.	Winona
87	Matt Brown	TE	6-3	226	Fr.	Cordova, TN
11	Barry Brunetti	QB	6-0	212	Sr.	Memphis, TN
14	Serderius Bryant	LB	5-9	223	Jr.	Sanford, FL
2	Quintavius Burdette	DB	5-11	189	So.	Senatobia
71	Pierce Burton	OL	6-6	289	Sr.	Sacramento, CA
41	Billy Busch	RB	5-11	235	Jr.	St. Louis, MO
97	Tyler Campbell	P	6-2	235	Sr.	Little Rock, AR
12	Cliff Coleman	DB	5-10	181	Jr.	Lauderale Lakes, FL
1	Dehendret Collins	DB	5-10	185	Sr.	Meadville
94	Chris Conley	P	5-8	197	Sr.	Bradenton, FL
78	Robert Conyers	OL	6-3	277	Fr.	Miami, FL
88	Cody Core	WR	6-3	191	So.	Auburn, AL
19	Louis Covington	DB	5-9	162	Sr.	Baton Rouge, LA
20	Carlos Davis	DB	5-9	163	So.	Birmingham, AL
59	Will Denny	LS	5-11	230	Jr.	Jackson
7	Mark Dodson	RB	5-10	193	Fr.	Memphis, TN
54	Austin Douglas	OL	6-2	320	Jr.	Batesville
74	Jared Duke	OL	6-7	354	Sr.	Cleveland, TN
82	Dylan Dyer	TE	6-6	240	Sr.	Flora
7	Trae Elston	DB	6-0	190	So.	Oxford, AL
52	Will Few	LS	6-3	245	Fr.	Augusta, GA
26	Andrew Fletcher	K	5-9	167	Jr.	Nashville, TN
86	Jordan Gallegos	WR	5-9	164	Fr.	New Albany, OH
21	Senquez Golson	DB	5-9	188	Jr.	Pascagoula
22	Tyriek Gracia	DB	6-2	206	Jr.	Hialeah, FL
8	Terrell Grant	WR	6-3	208	Sr.	Cleveland
53	Tyler Gray	DL	6-3	245	Fr.	Pelahatchie
40	Josh Gregory	DB	6-2	208	So.	Alpharetta, GA
94	Issac Gross	DL	6-1	254	So.	Batesville
56	Woodrow Hamilton	DT	6-3	292	So.	Raleigh
28	Mike Hilton	DB	5-8	182	So.	Fayetteville, GA
7	Jordan Holder	WR	5-11	177	Sr.	Bay Springs
45	Lavon Hooks	DL	6-4	290	Jr.	Atlanta, GA
65	Chase Hughes	OL	6-3	292	Jr.	Springville, AL
50	Ethan Hutson	OL	6-4	306	So.	Destrehan, LA
10	C.J. Johnson	DE	6-3	233	Jr.	Philadelphia
77	Patrick Junen	OL	6-3	314	Sr.	Huntsville, AL
62	Garrett Kalem	LS	6-3	225	So.	Milan, TN
28	LaKedrick King	DB	5-8	181	Jr.	Duncanville, TX
24	Keith Lewis	LB	6-1	235	Jr.	Tampa, FL
85	Ja-Mes Logan	WR	6-3	195	Sr.	Houston, TX
38	Mike Marry	LB	6-3	256	Sr.	Clearwater, FL
92	Carlton Martin	DT	6-2	288	Jr.	Madison
26	Will Martin	LB	6-1	210	Sr.	Madison
5	I'Tavius Mathers	RB	5-11	196	So.	Murfreesboro, TN
13	Brishen Mathews	DB	6-0	200	Sr.	Monticello, AR
70	Emmanuel McCray	OL	6-5	316	Sr.	Jackson
9	Maikhail Miller	QB	6-2	240	So.	Fulton
2	Quadarias Mireles	WR	5-11	185	Jr.	Delray Beach, FL
12	Donte Moncrief	WR	6-3	216	Jr.	Raleigh
16	Collins Moore	WR	6-1	196	Jr.	Madison, AL
15	Christian Morgan	TE	6-4	255	Fr.	Plano, TX
72	Aaron Morris	OL	6-5	330	Jr.	Jackson
64	Tyler Mt. Joy	OL	6-1	261	So.	The Woodlands, TX
28	Korvic Neat	WR	5-9	164	Sr.	Hallandale, FL
4	Denzel Nkemdiche	LB	5-11	203	So.	Loganville, GA
91	Nathan Noble	K	6-4	211	So.	Greenville
84	Jack Nuismer	TE	6-3	237	Sr.	Nashville, TN
19	Andy Pappanastos	K	5-11	180	Fr.	Montgomery, AL
4	Nicholas Parker	RB	6-0	225	Jr.	Batesville
80	Josh Pinkston	WR	6-1	195	Jr.	Forest
26	Jimmy Potepa	RB	5-8	204	So.	Monrovia, Liberia
25	Cody Prewitt	DB	6-2	214	Jr.	Bay Springs
17	Khalid Purnell	QB	5-10	214	Sr.	Philadelphia, PA
25	Darryan Ragsdale	RB	5-10	183	So.	Pelahatchie
88	John Ratliff	WR	6-0	181	So.	Fort Worth, TX
13	Robert Ratliff	QB	6-2	217	Sr.	Fort Worth, TX
20	Jeremy Reed	WR	5-6	150	Jr.	Southaven
27	Josh Richardson	DB	5-10	180	Jr.	Moss Point
96	Andrew Ritter	K/P	6-3	220	Sr.	Jackson
10	Vince Sanders	WR	6-1	190	Jr.	Macon
3	Charles Sawyer	DB	5-11	181	Sr.	Miami, FL
44	Charlie Scott	RB	5-11	200	So.	Jackson
3	Jeff Scott	RB	5-7	170	Sr.	Miami, FL
9	D.T. Shackelford	LB	6-1	250	Sr.	Decatur, AL
23	Anthony Standifer	DB	6-0	182	So.	Crete, IL
75	Park Stevens	OL	6-6	351	So.	Columbus
61	Ben Still	OL	6-2	280	So.	Memphis, TN
32	Temario Strong	LB	6-0	240	Fr.	Batesville
51	Walker Sturgeon	DE	6-2	254	Jr.	Horn Lake
56	Evan Swindall	C	6-4	295	Sr.	LaFayette, GA
54	Carlos Thompson	DE	6-4	243	Jr.	Hollandale
14	Bo Wallace	QB	6-4	204	Jr.	Pulaski, TN
46	Colton Walls	LB	5-11	207	So.	Charlotte, NC
6	Jaylen Walton	RB	5-8	167	So.	Memphis, TN
11	Channing Ward	DE	6-4	256	So.	Aberdeen
19	Justin Watts	K	5-11	185	So.	Suwanee, GA
55	Cameron Whigham	DE	6-3	255	Sr.	Snellville, GA
60	Derrick Wilson	OL	6-2	326	Sr.	Greenville
36	Kameron Wood	DE	6-3	258	Fr.	Birmingham, AL
47	John Youngblood	TE	6-3	237	Fr.	Trussville, AL
89	Taz Zettergren	TE	6-4	225	Fr.	Senatobia

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
B. Wallace	13	142.69	235	368	17	63.9	2994	22	77	230.3
B. Brunetti	12	118.79	23	36	0	63.9	196	1	36	16.3

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Moncrief	13	66	979	14.8	10	77	75.3
J. Logan	13	43	490	11.4	1	47	37.7
V. Sanders	13	39	504	12.9	4	41	38.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Scott	12	197	900	54	846	4.3	6	48	70.5
B. Wallace	13	143	603	213	390	2.7	8	58	30.0
R. Mackey	13	79	374	49	325	4.1	4	28	25.0

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: D. Nkemdiche 82, C. Prewitt 80, M. Marry 78
Tackles for loss: D. Nkemdiche 13, M. Marry 10.5, I. Gross 10
Sacks: C.J. Johnson 6.5, U. Grant 5, J. Jones 3.5
Interceptions: D. Nkemdiche 3, S. Golson 3, D. Collins 3

NOTEBOOK

Blue pants. White pants. Longer stripes on the sleeves.

As far as uniform changes go, what Ole Miss unveiled this spring still counts as very mild. But the Rebels will have options for the 2013 season beyond grey pants, and that has angered the segment of the fanbase that would prefer the team's look remain as traditional as possible.

Not that you'll hear the players saying those kinds of things.

"I love it," linebacker **Mike Marry** said. "When we did the photo shoot, I didn't want to take it off. I never thought we would change uniforms period."

Said defensive end **Channing Ward**: "I like the new uniforms. I just like the all-white ones. I'd wear the all-whites every game."

Ole Miss will have four options for its jersey: blue, red, white with blue lettering and white with red lettering. There are three pants options: blue, grey and white. From the photos provided, at least the blue have the word Rebels down the side.

The uniform changes have been coming, and athletics director **Ross Bjork** said in January that the look would remain overall very similar and that Ole Miss would not deviate from navy helmets.

Still, recruits love new uniforms and coach **Hugh Freeze** is going to give them at least a taste of something different.

• After losing two years to ACL surgeries, linebacker **D.T. Shackelford** returned to Ole Miss' team this spring.

Shackelford, who finished the spring with the second team, will play defensive end as well, coordinator **Dave Wommack** said.

Shackelford was one of the more promising members of the team, and its leading pass-rusher in 2010, when he tore his ACL during 2011 spring drills. A year later doctors made the decision to give him a second surgery, because of swelling in his knee. That cost him 2012 and gives him one year of eligibility remaining (though he could apply for a sixth year).

In the meantime, Shackelford earned his bachelor's degree and is working on his master's. He wants to be an educator.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Ole Miss' offense:** "Hugh Freeze did a good job with that offense last year, caught everybody off guard. It will be hard to do that again this year in the conference. They've always had speed of offense, on the edges and at running back. It's a deal where they spread the field and make people play honest. They had more success throwing the football than I could have imagined with a quarterback that's not a big-time quarterback. ... Bo Wallace is average as hell."

• **On 2013 predictions:** "They're a team that might get bowl eligible, but it wouldn't surprise me if they didn't. With the success they had last year and the recruiting class they had, they'll have a hard time meeting expectations. They probably snuck up on some people last year. I'd be surprised if they duplicate it."

Bo Wallace
Photo by RD Moore

just could not get to last season, spent part of spring toying around with all that he can do besides the 4-2-5 base.

"There's five or six (linebackers) there that you can play in a game," Wommack said. "That makes it easier for us to go into our 4-3. We spent three or four days on 4-3, which we didn't last spring. So we got ahead on some of that stuff. I think they're the nucleus and the leadership of our defense."

At the heart of the defense will be sophomore Denzel Nkemdiche, who led the team in every major defensive category as a redshirt freshman despite being a 200-pound (maybe) linebacker. He's just so fast and has such good instincts, linebacker coach Tom Allen said, that linemen find it difficult to get a clean block on him. His linebacker counterpart, Mike Marry, is a quiet leader who will wear No. 38 this year as the Chucky Mullins Award winner (the highest honor on the Ole Miss defense).

Defensive line coach Chris Kiffin is still searching for a true pass-rusher. It may be junior C.J. Johnson, who wants to be it badly, but whose size (233 pounds) can be a negative. Nkemdiche's younger brother, Robert, was the No. 1 prospect in the country and should start from day one. But he's not a Jadeveon Clowney-type; he's less of a freak athlete and more of a bull at 6-5 and 270 pounds.

Wommack's biggest concern is at cornerback, where junior Nick Brassell can be a game-changer as long as he's academically eligible by August. If not, junior Senquez Golson will have to be more consistent than he was as a sophomore.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ole Miss rolled the dice in 2012. Faced with a senior punter (Tyler Campbell) who was struggling to regain his technique after a failed experiment with rugby-style kicking, and a senior kickoff specialist (Andrew Ritter)

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

WR Donte Moncrief

Led Ole Miss in catches (66), yards (979) and touchdowns (10) as a sophomore during the 2012 season. ... He had 27 catches for 439 yards and five touchdowns in the last four games, after being held without a reception by Georgia. ... He demanded constant safety attention and double-coverage after only a few weeks, which helped Ole Miss to get its slot receivers and running backs into favorable matchups.

EMERGING STAR

S Cody Prewitt

Was second on Ole Miss with 80 tackles in 2012. ... Also intercepted two passes, forced two fumbles and recovered two more. ... The junior can play up in the box or go sideline-to-sideline in the secondary to make a first down-saving stop. ... Struggled with communication, which led to a couple of big passes allowed. ... Prewitt, only two years removed from playing small-academy high school football, continues to show he has the capability to be an All-SEC free safety.

TOP NEWCOMER

DE Robert Nkemdiche

The No. 1 prospect in the country, Nkemdiche is a 6-5, 260-pound defensive end from Loganville, Ga. ... Younger brother of linebacker Denzel, who played a pivotal role in getting Nkemdiche to Ole Miss. ... Already physically strong enough to play every down, Nkemdiche could even be used as a three-technique defensive tackle on passing downs. ... Position coach Chris Kiffin said he stays up at night thinking about Nkemdiche and No. 1 offensive tackle recruit Laremy Tunsil going head-to-head in fall camp.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.6	41
Rushing	207.6	18
Passing	192.3	82
Total	399.8	43
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	35.2	107
Rushing	152.8	61
Passing	246.3	103
Total	399.2	81
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 6	- 0.5	88

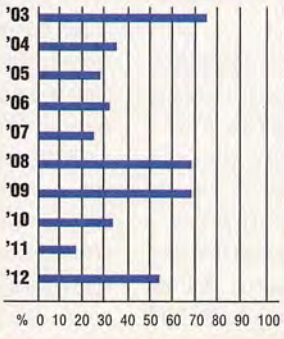
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	16.1	116
Rushing	129.6	83
Passing	151.7	107
Total	281.3	114
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	32.1	96
Rushing	224.9	112
Passing	194.4	22
Total	419.3	90
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 8	- 0.67	100

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.5	47
Rushing	173.9	49
Passing	249.9	49
Total	423.8	46
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	27.6	60
Rushing	129.3	25
Passing	246.5	80
Total	375.8	46
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 1	- 0.08	63

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

7-6, 3-5

W	CENTRAL ARKANSAS	49-27
W	UTEP	28-10
L	TEXAS	31-66
W	at Tulane	39-0
L	at Alabama	14-33
L	TEXAS A&M	27-30
W	AUBURN	41-20
W	at Arkansas	30-27
L	at Georgia	10-37
L	VANDERBILT	26-27
L	at LSU	35-41
W	MISSISSIPPI STATE	41-24
	BBVA Compass Bowl	
W	vs. Pittsburgh	38-17

PLAYER PROFILE

Denzel Nkemdiche
Photo by Michael Wade

Elder Nkemdiche Looks To Lead Ole Miss D

The most popular athlete on the Ole Miss campus during the last year was not the quarterback, the basketball team's leading scorer or the baseball team's ace pitcher.

It was a 5-11, 203-pound redshirt freshman linebacker named Denzel Nkemdiche. How did that happen?

His on-field performance certainly helped — Nkemdiche was a Freshman All-American who led Ole Miss with 82 tackles, 13 for loss, four forced fumbles and three interceptions. He also has a famous brother, Robert, who in February became the first No. 1 overall recruit to ever sign with Ole Miss. That would have not happened without Denzel.

But it was just as much about Denzel Nkemdiche's personality, which made his popularity grow even as a newcomer to campus in 2011. He hadn't been recruited by any other SEC school and was being redshirted because the coaching staff had no idea where to play him.

A new group of coaches figured out that Nkemdiche, despite his size, was strong and fast enough to play linebacker. Once on the field, Nkemdiche also assumed a leadership role that teammates, who flock to him, readily gave him.

"It wasn't hard, I just had to show them on Saturdays that I could perform and that I didn't want to just talk and not back it up," Nkemdiche said. "They've seen that and it's a confidence out of love."

Said coach Hugh Freeze: "Denzel brings it every single play."

Perhaps no player more embraced Freeze's team-building philosophy. Nkemdiche, who is from the Atlanta suburbs, admitted during game week that he did not really understand the Egg Bowl rivalry with Mississippi State. But he saw how much it mattered to his teammates, and they were his brothers, so it mattered to him.

And when Ole Miss beat MSU, 41-24, to take back the Golden Egg for the first time since 2008, there was Nkemdiche next to Freeze in the middle of the celebrating crowd.

For his redshirt sophomore season, Nkemdiche said he'd like to add a few pounds. But it's more about taking the next step, both for himself and as a defense.

"We're starting to fill out and get some depth and really understand the defense, so it's going well," Nkemdiche said. "I just want to keep getting better at mastering my position, making sure I make zero mistakes and trying to help everyone else around me. Just pick the team up, so we have a good defense."

stuck behind a classmate, the Rebels redshirted both.

What that means is that while Ole Miss technically lost its top kicker and punter from last season, it replaces both with players who have significant experience. And, in the case of Campbell, someone who can be a significant upgrade.

Campbell's mechanics are cured, and he could be back to his 2010 exploits (when he led the SEC with a 46.37-yard average). Ritter will battle freshman Andy Pappanastos for the kicking job but is the favorite.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Ole Miss will open and end the season on Thursday night, thanks to ESPN. Freeze, always in pursuit of national TV games, endorsed the season opener at Vanderbilt and the Egg Bowl against Mississippi being moved to Thursday because it meant more eyeballs watching his Rebels.

In between, Ole Miss will face one of the more unusual schedules in the nation. Four of the first five games are on the road, including trips to Texas and Alabama (the latter for a second straight season). But the Rebels then play six home games in seven weeks, starting with Texas A&M and LSU.

If Ole Miss can make it through the first half of the season, the second could be where it gets on a roll and meets its goals.

— Hugh Kellenberger

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 29	at Vanderbilt	9-4
Sept. 7	SOUTHEAST MISSOURI	3-8
Sept. 14	at Texas	9-4
Sept. 28	at Alabama	13-1
Oct. 5	at Auburn	3-9
Oct. 12	TEXAS A&M	11-2
Oct. 19	LSU	10-3
Oct. 26	IDAHO	1-11
Nov. 9	ARKANSAS	4-8
Nov. 16	TROY	5-7
Nov. 23	MISSOURI	5-7
Nov. 28	at Mississippi State	8-5

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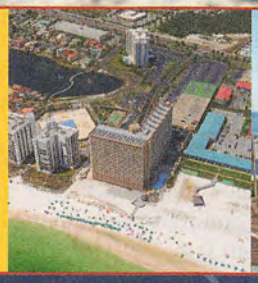

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MISSISSIPPI STATE BULLDOGS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Les Koenning | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Geoff Collins** | **STADIUM: Davis-Wade Stadium: 55,082**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
8-5 overall, 4-4 SEC (4th, West)

COACH:
Dan Mullen — At Mississippi State and overall: 29-22, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
12; 6 offense, 5 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Tyler Russell, RB LaDarius Perkins, WR Jameon Lewis, C Dillon Day, OG Gabe Jackson, DE Denico Autry, S Nickoe Whitley

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Russell, a fifth-year senior, provides a wealth of experience, as does a strong offensive line led by Day and Jackson. Autry fronts a talented and deep defensive line, which welcomes five-star recruit Chris Jones to the fold this year.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
While there is some talent, the defensive secondary lacks experience and leadership with Johnthan Banks and Darius Slay off to the NFL. Similarly at the wide receiver position, Mississippi State will debut three new starters without much game experience. Field-goal kicking could be an issue again in 2013.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Chad Bumphis, WR Arceto Clark, LB Cam Lawrence, DB Johnthan Banks, DB Darius Slay

OVERVIEW:
Mississippi State ended its 2012 season in disappointing fashion, yet hopes a talent infusion could help put it over the top in 2013. There is a lot of young talent on the roster, but much of it lacks SEC experience. How its young players fare could determine where Mississippi State finishes in the difficult SEC West division.

When 'Good' is Simply No Longer Good Enough

Mississippi State learned the hard way in 2012 that, with success, comes heightened expectations.

Mississippi State finished 8-5, one of the program's best records in the 21st century, but was disappointed with the way it finished.

The Bulldogs opened 7-0 and with an ambitious "We Believe" social media campaign, only to see the bottom fall out. They finished 1-5 in their last six games, including a decisive loss to in-state rival Ole Miss in the Egg Bowl.

This is the problem coach Dan Mullen faces in Year 5 at Mississippi State. Mullen has slowly but surely built MSU into a respectable program again, but there is still a next step.

Simply making it to a bowl game isn't good enough anymore in Starkville. Now fans want to go to bigger and better bowls, and hopefully make a trip to Atlanta as champions of the ultra-competitive SEC West.

If any of that is to happen in 2013, it will be because of fifth-year senior quarterback Tyler Russell. Mullen doubled down in the spring with Russell, giving him a lot more input to call the plays he wants.

"The great thing when you have a fifth-year senior quarterback, he is going to feel very comfortable in making his input," Mullen said.

"I think some young guys sometimes they want to give input, but they don't know they know enough to give input that makes sense. Whereas with Tyler Russell now, he knows our system; he knows our offense; he knows what we want to accomplish, he knows what he is comfortable with."

Russell had a career year in 2012, but played a big role in the late-season disappointment. He threw for 2,897 yards and 24 touchdowns overall, but six interceptions in his last two games left some questioning whether he was the right person to get the Bulldogs over the hump.

Russell thought long and hard in the spring about his poor end to 2012 and has used it as motivation to work harder.

"Last season didn't end the way we wanted to, but you take the good and the bad," Russell said. "The bad is in the bowl game where I performed terrible. But it also motivated me to watch more film and work so much harder."

OFFENSE

Fifth-year senior quarterback Tyler Russell almost has it all.

He has a talented and experienced offensive line protecting him. He has a veteran 1,000-yard running back in LaDarius Perkins behind him.

There's only one issue: Who can he count on to catch the football?

Gone this season are Russell's three favorite wide receivers: Chad Bumphis, Arceto Clark and Chris Smith. Bumphis was Russell's go-to target and caught 58 passes for 922 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Russell will be forced to rely on a talented, but inexperienced group of receivers. The expected three starters have a combined 32 catches for 325 yards and two touchdowns. Robert Johnson and Jameon Lewis emerged as clear starters in the spring, while sophomore wide receiver Joe Morrow and junior college transfer Jeremey Chappelle should battle for the last spot.

Chappelle (6-3, 210) led all receivers in the spring game with eight catches for 114 yards and a touchdown.

"I hope this is a real confidence-builder for him coming out of spring right now going into the summer," Mullen said. "Because he now understands. He's been through an offseason program;

LaDarius Perkins
Photo by Michael Wade

he's been through spring practice; he's been through what the offense is."

At 6-2, 235, junior Malcolm Johnson gives Russell a big target at tight end. Brandon Hill, who had two touchdowns in the spring game, Gus Walley and Christian Holmes should also rotate in and get some time.

Perkins is the known commodity at running back after rushing for 1,064 yards last season, but he could get fewer carries in 2013. Sophomores Josh Robinson and Derrick Milton are two tough, bruising backs who should ease Perkins' workload. Brandon Holloway could also take a few carries due to his incredible speed and footwork.

Holloway rushed for 128 yards and two touchdowns in the spring game.

"He can put his foot in the ground and make a cut as quick as you imagine," running backs coach Greg Knox said. "Anybody that possesses that home run speed is somebody you have to find ways to get the ball to no matter the position."

It helps that Holloway and Co. have a strong offensive line ahead of them. Left guard Gabe Jackson leads an experienced offensive line that did a pretty good job in 2012. The left side with Jackson, who has started 29 games, left tackle Blaine Clausell and center Dillon Day is clearly the strength of the line and will be utilized for creating running holes.

On the right side there is more competition and less certainty. Sophomore Justin Malone is expected to start at right guard unless Tobias Smith comes back for a sixth-year. Senior right tackle Charles Siddoway had the edge at the start of spring, but entered summer basically in a dead heat with junior Damien Robinson.

DEFENSE

A slew of new coaches and starting players promise a new-look Mississippi State defense in 2013.

Geoff Collins now has sole control of the defense after sharing the duties last season with Chris Wilson, who left the program for Georgia.

Collins, known around the program as the "Minister of Mayhem," has installed a more aggressive and attacking defense this spring. It was a needed move after the Bulldogs gave up 30 or more points in five of their last six games.

"He's got a lot of energy and has a lot of excitement," Mullen said. "And I want a defense that plays with that energy and that excitement and intensity, running around. I like to see it."

Collins also welcomed two new staff additions: Defensive line coach David Turner, who arrives from Kentucky, and former NFL player Deshea Townsend, who will coach the defensive backs.

The biggest issue the new staff faces is trying to replace Jim Thorpe Award-

Tyler Russell
Photo by Michael Wade

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tyler Russell*	Sr.	Threw for 2,897 yards and 24 touchdowns in 2012.	Dak Prescott, So.
RB	LaDarius Perkins*	Sr.	Missed spring game with a head injury.	Josh Robinson, So.
WR	Robert Johnson	Jr.	Big, physical target that should flourish in red zone.	Fred Brown, Fr.
WR	Jameon Lewis	Jr.	Speedy slot receiver was Russell's favorite spring target.	Brandon Holloway, Fr.
WR	Joe Morrow	So.	Still struggling with route-running and catching the ball.	Jeremey Chappelle, Jr.
TE	Malcolm Johnson	Jr.	Caught 10 passes, including two for touchdowns, in 2012.	Brandon Hill, Jr.
LT	Blaine Clausell*	Jr.	Struggled handling pressure off the edge in 2012.	Justin Senior, Fr.
LG	Gabe Jackson*	Sr.	Has started 29 consecutive games.	Ben Beckwith, Jr.
C	Dillon Day*	Jr.	Graded 80 percent or above in eight games.	Dylan Holley, Sr.
RG	Justin Malone	So.	Most inexperienced starter on the offensive line.	Archie Muniz, Jr.
RT	Charles Siddoway*	Sr.	Alternated in spring between first and second team.	Damien Robinson, Jr.
PK	Devon Bell	So.	Struggled in the spring with accuracy.	Brian Egan, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Preston Smith	Jr.	Led Bulldogs with 4.5 sacks in 2012.	Ryan Brown, So.
DT	P.J. Jones	Jr.	Has the size and speed to be an impact player.	Curtis Virges, Jr.
DT	Kaleb Eulls*	Jr.	Flourished in spring after move from DE.	Nick James, So.
DE	Denico Autry*	Sr.	Had 3 TFL, 2 sacks and 3QBH in last four games.	A.J. Jefferson, Fr.
LB	Matthew Wells	Jr.	Most untested LB in deep group.	Beniquez Brown, Fr.
LB	Benardrick McKinney*	So.	Leading tackling returner with 102 in 2012.	Ferlando Bohanna, Jr.
LB	Deontae Skinner*	Sr.	Missed a lot of spring with injury.	Chris Hughes, Sr.
CB	Jamerson Love	Jr.	Replaces Jim Thorpe Award winner.	Cedric Jiles, So.
CB	Justin Cox	Jr.	NFL talent, but still figuring out playbook.	Will Redmond, Fr.
SS	Jay Hughes	Jr.	Had INT and big tackles in spring game.	Kendrick Market, So.
FS	Nickoe Whitley*	Sr.	Most experienced player in secondary.	Dee Arrington, Jr.
P	Baker Swedenburg*	Sr.	Didn't have a punt blocked in 2012.	Mike Mordecai, Fr.

*Returning Starter

BULLDOGS RECRUITING 2013 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Chris Jones
Mississippi State signed only one defensive lineman, but he is a good one. Jones, a five-star defensive end, is the true definition of a sleeper, flying under the recruiting radar until December. Jones wowed with his aggressive pass rush and athleticism at the MS/AL All-Star Classic and the Under Armour All-American Bowl.

Fred Ross
The Bulldogs were able to flip Ross from a year-long commitment to Oklahoma State. Ross, a four-star wide receiver, should have a chance to contribute right away for MSU in the slot. The team lost two seniors at that spot and six wideouts overall. Ross had 1,594 receiving yards and 21 touchdowns as a senior.

Cord Sandberg
If Dan Mullen wanted another Tim Tebow, Sandberg might be his best shot. The southpaw signal-caller from the Sunshine State molded his game after the former Heisman Trophy winner and was one of the nation's top dual-threat quarterback. Sandberg is also a highly regarded MLB prospect.

THE SLEEPER

De'Runnya Wilson
Wilson returned to the gridiron after a two-year absence and averaged 21 yards per touch. While Wilson has a ways to go in learning the game, his raw athleticism and leaping ability are apparent. At 6-6, 220 pounds, he led Wenonah to a Class 5A state basketball championship and was named Mr. Basketball in Alabama.

Committments	21
Average Stars	3.10
★★★★★	1
★★★★☆	2
★★★☆☆	16
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	65
National Rank: 26	SEC: 11

2014 NEEDS: Mississippi State loaded up on defensive linemen, signing eight in 2012, but inked only Chris Jones in 2013. The Bulldogs will have to add several along the defensive line in 2014. Another area of need comes at linebacker, where MSU signed only Dezmond Harris in 2013. Expect the Bulldogs to fill up once again on linebackers. Injuries have also plagued and ended the careers of several of State's young offensive linemen in the past two seasons, so expect the Bulldogs to target some junior college O-linemen to fill that gap.

— by Logan Lowery/BulldogBlitz.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jeremey Chappelle	WR	6-2	212	★★★	Tyler, TX	Tyler J.C.

Played at Stephen F. Austin as a true freshman and caught 17 passes for 175 yards in 2010 ... Named first team All-Conference after making 60 catches for 801 yards following transfer to Tyler JC as a sophomore ... Enrolled at MSU in January.

Shelby Christy	WR	6-4	200	★★★	Geismar, LA	Dutchtown

Rated the No. 31 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com ... Rated as the nation's No. 87 wide receiver ... Caught 39 passes for 663 yards and five touchdowns as a senior ... Two-time state champion in track and field ... Won the Class 5A triple jump title with a leap of 45 feet.

Jamaal Clayborn	OL	6-4	315	★★	Jackson, MS	Jackson Academy

Named first team All-State in the Mississippi Association of Private Schools ... Played in four consecutive Class AAA state championship games and won three titles ... Won the 2012 state championship with a shot put toss of 49 feet, seven inches.

Tolando Cleveland	DB	5-11	170	★★★	Powder Springs, GA	Hillgrove

Named to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* Super 75 prospects list ... Credited with 81 tackles and four interceptions in 2011 ... Longtime Georgia Tech commitment flipped to the Bulldogs a week before signing day.

Kivon Coman	DB	6-1	195	★★★	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy

Originally signed with MSU in 2012 along with cousin Beniquez Brown ... Rated No. 17 prep school prospect by Rivals.com ... Recorded 57 tackles and three interceptions during his one season at Hargrave ... Enrolled at MSU in January.

Justin Cox	DB	6-3	190	★★★	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.

Originally signed with MSU in 2011 ... Rated the No. 48 junior college prospect by Rivals.com ... Compiled 119 tackles, 11 interceptions and 19 pass breakups during two seasons at EMCC ... Led EMCC to the 2011 national championship ... Enrolled at MSU in January.

Kent Flowers	OL	6-5	300	★★★	Hollandale, MS	Simmons School

Rated the No. 17 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com ... Named to the Dandy Dozen list by the *Clarion Ledger* ... Earned Class 2A first team All-State honors ... Started at tackle in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.

Donald Gray Jr.	ATH	5-9	160	★★★	Memphis, TN	White Station

Rated the No. 15 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 54 athlete nationally by Rivals.com ... Named Class 6A first team All-State ... Caught 48 passes for 1,023 yards and 15 touchdowns as a senior ... Played in the Liberty Bowl All-Star Classic.

B.J. Hammond	WR	6-4	207	★★★	Gadsden, AL	Gadsden City

Rated the No. 23 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com ... Caught 15 passes for 306 yards and three touchdowns as a senior ... Hauled in 39 passes for 639 yards and six touchdowns during his junior campaign.

Dezmond Harris	ATH	6-3	207	★★	McCalla, AL	McAdory

Missed the entire 2012 season with a torn ACL ... Rushed and passed for over 1,000 yards as a quarterback during his junior campaign ... Expected to play linebacker at the next level ... Was the only linebacker prospect the Bulldogs signed.

Jahmere Irvin-Sills	DB	5-10	173	★★★	Elkton, MD	Eastern Christian Academy

Rated the No. 14 prospect in Maryland by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 36 cornerback in the country by Rivals.com ... Was the final addition to the Bulldogs 2013 class ... Was previously committed to Auburn under Gene Chizik.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Chris Jones	DE	6-5	250	★★★★★	Houston, MS	Houston

Rated the top player in Mississippi by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 2 defensive end nationally by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 20 overall prospect in the country by Rivals.com ... Had 160 tackles and 14 sacks as a senior ... Played in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic and the Under Armour All-American Bowl.

Gabe Myles	ATH	6-1	182	★★★	Starkville, MS	Starkville

Rated the No. 11 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com ... Led Starkville to a Class 5A State Championship in 2012 throwing for 1,153 yards, rushing for 554 yards and accounting for 21 touchdowns ... Earned first team All-State honors ... Started in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic at cornerback.

Fred Ross	WR	6-1	200	★★★★	Tyler, TX	John Tyler

Rated the No. 23 wide receiver nationally by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 26 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 208 prospect overall in the Rivals250 ... Named first team *Parade* All-American ... Caught 185 passes for 2,929 yards and 36 touchdowns his final two varsity seasons.

Artimas Samuel	TE	6-2	227	★★★	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy

Signed with MSU as a wide receiver in 2012 ... Rated the No. 22 prep school prospect by Rivals.com ... Caught eight passes for 117 yards and two touchdowns at Hargrave ... Enrolled at MSU in January.

Cord Sandberg	QB	6-3	205	★★★★	Bradenton, FL	Manatee

Rated the No. 8 dual-threat quarterback by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 24 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 158 recruit nationally in the Rivals250 ... Threw for 7,716 yards, 78 touchdowns and only 11 interceptions during his three years as the starter ... Named the Class 7A Offensive Player of the Year ... Considered a top MLB outfield prospect.

Ashton Shumpert	ATH	6-2	205	★★★	Fulton, MS	Itawamba Agricultural

Named Mississippi's Gatorade Player of the Year ... Rated the No. 6 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 31 athlete in the nation by Rivals.com ... Rushed for 1,796 yards and 25 touchdowns as a senior averaging 11.7 yards per carry ... Started at running back in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.

Jake Thomas	OL	6-6	305	★★★	Columbus, MS	Columbus Sr

Rated the No. 8 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 51 offensive tackle by Rivals.com ... Played for Team USA U-19 team in the International Bowl ... Earned first team All-State honors ... Started in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.

Brandon Wells	WR	6-1	180	★★★	Bogue Chitto, MS	Bogue Chitto

Rated the No. 13 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com ... Rated the No. 96 wide receiver by Rivals.com ... Accumulated 1,593 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior ... Three time All-State selection ... Played safety in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.

Damian Williams	QB	6-1	215	★★★	Metairie, LA	Rummel

Rated the No. 36 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com ... Led Rummel to a 14-0 record and the Class 5A State Championship in 2012 ... Threw for 2,748 yards, ran for 932 and accounted for 49 touchdowns as a four-year starter ... Was selected first team All-State by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association.

De'Runnya Wilson	WR	6-6	220	★★★	Birmingham, AL	Wenonah

Rated the No. 30 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com ... Caught 31 passes for 682 yards and seven touchdowns in 2012 ... Led Wenonah to three state championships in basketball ... Was named Alabama's Mr. Basketball and was awarded MVP of the Alabama-Mississippi High School All-Star basketball game.

BULLDOGS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
94	Nelson Adams	DL	6-3	295	Fr.	Brandon
26	Kasey Akins	RB	5-6	185	Sr.	Starkville
29	Quadry Antoine	DB	5-10	215	Fr.	Belle Chasse, LA
38	Dee Arrington	DB	6-1	220	Jr.	Wiggins
90	Denico Autry	DL	6-6	265	Sr.	Albemarle, NC
26	James Baldwin	DB	5-10	195	So.	Birmingham, AL
32	Brandyn Bartlett	ATH	5-11	195	Fr.	Dacula, GA
66	Ben Beckwith	OL	6-3	305	Jr.	Benton
40	Devon Bell	K	6-2	195	So.	Vicksburg
52	Ferlando Bohanna	LB	6-0	225	Jr.	Memphis, TN
88	Hunter Bradley	TE	6-3	235	Fr.	Collierville, TN
42	Beniquez Brown	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	Florence, AL
86	Fred Brown	WR	6-1	185	Fr.	Jackson
39	Richie Brown	LB	6-2	235	Fr.	Long Beach
48	Ryan Brown	DL	6-6	260	So.	New Orleans, LA
37	Taveze Calhoun	DB	6-1	180	So.	Morton
25	Michael Carr	WR	6-1	215	Sr.	West Point
71	Cole Carter	OL	6-6	290	Fr.	Caledonia
72	Winston Chapman	ATH	6-2	235	So.	Fairhope, AL
83	Jeremey Chappelle	WR	6-3	210	Jr.	Tyler, TX
75	Blaine Clausell	OL	6-7	310	Jr.	Mobile, AL
33	Kivon Coman	DB	6-3	195	Fr.	Sheffield, AL
14	Sam Cowart	ATH	6-1	210	Jr.	Magee
20	Justin Cox	DB	6-3	195	Jr.	West Point
22	Josh Creekmore	ATH	5-6	185	Fr.	New Albany
79	Hunter Cunningham	ATH	6-4	320	So.	Maben
49	Torrey Dale	DL	6-6	250	Fr.	Kenner, LA
34	Brandon Davis	ATH	5-9	170	Fr.	Memphis, TN
63	Dillon Day	OL	6-4	300	Jr.	West Monroe, LA
62	Devon Desper	OL	6-4	300	Fr.	Madison
31	Taylor Earhart	K	6-1	180	Sr.	Olive Branch
53	Brian Egan	K	5-11	210	Sr.	Prattville, AL
92	Kaleb Eulls	DL	6-4	290	Jr.	Yazoo City
17	Deonte Evans	DB	5-10	210	Fr.	McComb
54	Quay Evans	DL	6-3	310	So.	Morton
31	Will Goodwin	K	6-0	180	Jr.	Starkville
7	Nick Griffin	RB	6-0	225	Jr.	New Augusta
9	Josh Hand	ATH	6-0	205	Jr.	Cumming, GA
99	John Harris	DL	6-5	235	So.	Boynton Beach, FL
56	Corvell Harrison-Gay	DL	6-3	265	Sr.	Laurel
18	Brandon Hill	TE	6-2	240	Jr.	Columbus
39	Michael Hodges	ATH	5-10	195	Fr.	Aberdeen
55	Dylan Holley	OL	6-3	290	Sr.	D'Iberville
80	Brandon Holloway	ATH	5-8	165	Fr.	Tampa, FL
44	Christian Holmes	TE	6-1	220	Jr.	Puckett
12	Chris Hughes	LB	6-1	225	Sr.	Mobile, AL
30	Jay Hughes	DB	5-11	195	Jr.	Hattiesburg
61	Gabe Jackson	OL	6-4	335	Sr.	Liberty
45	Zachary Jackson	DB	6-1	215	So.	Heidelberg
88	Nick James	DL	6-5	345	So.	Long Beach
47	A.J. Jefferson	DL	6-3	260	Fr.	Summit
14	Cedric Jiles	DB	5-10	180	So.	Clinton
6	Malcolm Johnson	TE	6-2	235	Jr.	Tuscaloosa, AL
81	Robert Johnson	WR	6-1	225	Jr.	Hattiesburg
93	P.J. Jones	DL	6-3	295	Jr.	Tupelo
69	Rodney Lacy	ATH	5-11	290	Fr.	Birmingham, AL
4	Jameon Lewis	WR	5-9	195	Jr.	Tylertown
35	Johnathan Long	ATH	5-11	190	Fr.	Martinez, GA
24	Jamerson Love	DB	5-10	175	Jr.	Aberdeen
70	Justin Malone	OL	6-7	320	So.	Madison
46	Kendrick Market	DB	5-10	190	So.	Batesville
41	Rishunn McCaleb	DB	6-3	200	Sr.	Indianola
74	Daniel McCray	LB	6-0	250	Jr.	Center Point, AL
50	Benardrick McKinney	LB	6-5	235	So.	Tunica
31	Tyrell Miller	ATH	5-9	175	So.	Hampton, VA
28	Derrick Milton	RB	6-0	210	So.	Pineville, LA
39	Mike Mordecai	P	6-3	195	Fr.	Madison
16	Joe Morrow	WR	6-4	210	So.	Ocean Springs
59	Archie Muniz	OL	6-5	300	Jr.	Houston, TX
43	Ivan Muniz	LB	6-1	220	Jr.	Houston, TX
87	Javous Nicks	ATH	5-11	170	Fr.	Brandon
27	LaDarius Perkins	RB	5-10	195	Sr.	Greenville
15	Dak Prescott	QB	6-2	230	So.	Haughton, LA
2	Will Redmond	DB	6-0	190	Fr.	Memphis, TN
78	Damien Robinson	OL	6-8	335	Jr.	Olive Branch
34	Josh Robinson	RB	5-9	225	So.	Franklinton, LA
29	Justin Rogers	ATH	5-11	200	Jr.	Starkville
17	Tyler Russell	QB	6-4	220	Sr.	Meridian
85	Artimus Samuel	TE	6-2	260	Fr.	Columbus, GA
11	Ricco Sanders	WR	5-11	195	Sr.	Duncan, SC
58	Justin Senior	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Montreal, Quebec
77	Charles Siddoway	OL	6-7	305	Sr.	Eugene, OR
51	Deontae Skinner	LB	6-2	250	Sr.	Macon
91	Preston Smith	DL	6-6	255	Jr.	Stone Mountain, GA
40	Evan Sobiesk	K	5-8	180	Fr.	Hattiesburg
72	Patrick Sparkman	OL	6-4	285	Sr.	Walnut Grove
39	Baker Swedenburg	P	6-0	205	Sr.	Columbus
73	Paul Thompson	OL	6-3	275	Jr.	Madison, NJ
98	Curtis Virges	DL	6-3	315	Jr.	West Point
89	Gus Walley	TE	6-4	245	Fr.	Richton
28	DeAndre Ward	ATH	6-0	205	Fr.	Wetumpka, AL
82	Rufus Warren	TE	6-7	265	So.	Indianola
95	Jordan Washington	DL	6-2	290	Fr.	Sugar Hill, GA
31	Vincent Watkins	ATH	5-9	145	Fr.	Disputana, VA
22	Matthew Wells	LB	6-2	215	Jr.	Monticello
84	Bailey West	SN	6-1	205	Jr.	Hollandale
5	Nickoe Whitley	DB	6-1	205	Sr.	Jackson

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. Russell	13	135.4	231	394	10	58.6	2897	24	72	222.8
D. Prescott	12	163.8	18	29	0	62.1	194	4	29	16.2

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
C. Bumphis	13	58	922	15.9	12	72	70.9
C. Smith	13	47	564	12.0	2	45	43.4
A. Clark	13	36	487	13.5	1	46	37.5

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
L. Perkins	12	205	1061	37	1024	5.0	8	64	85.3
J. Robinson	12	55	344	9	335	6.1	1	59	27.9
N. Griffin	13	32	234	11	223	7.0	1	60	17.2

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: C. Lawrence 120, B. McKinney 102, N. Whitley 88
Tackles for loss: C. Lawrence 10, D. Autry 9.5, P. Smith 5.5
Sacks: P. Smith 4.5, C. Lawrence 4, D. Autry 4
Interceptions: D. Slay 5, J. Banks 4, N. Whitley 3

NOTEBOOK

Since arriving at Mississippi State in 2010, wide receiver **Jameon Lewis** has had four different position coaches.

First, in his redshirt season, was Mark Hudspeth, who is now the head coach at Louisiana. In 2011, Angelo Mirando guided him through his first year on the field before leaving the program last summer due to "unforeseen personal reasons." This past season it was Tim Brewster, who left in February to become tight ends coach at Florida State.

Now the redshirt junior has **Billy Gonzales**, who arrives after a one-year stint as co-offensive coordinator and wide receivers coach at Illinois.

"Every coach is different in their own unique way, but I feel like Coach Gonzales is going to push us to the limit," Lewis said. "He's going to work on the small things. All of the other coaches did that too, but Coach Gonzales brings something new to the table. He's got a different burst of energy that makes you go get it."

• Neither may be a starter at the start of the season, but expect to see a lot of **Beniquez Brown** and **Richie Brown**. Both are redshirt freshman linebackers and former four-star recruits who showed this spring they are the most athletic players Mississippi State has at the position.

"He's such an intelligent kid," defensive coordinator **Geoff Collins** said about Beniquez Brown.

"We knew that when we recruited him. Anytime I say something to **Chris Hughes** or **Deontae Skinner**, he's like a sponge. He's dialed in all the time. He wants to be great. I think the same can be said for **Richie Brown**. They both want to be great football players here."

• Backup quarterback **Dak Prescott** was held out of the majority of spring with an injured toe. Prescott didn't participate in any of the scrimmages or the spring game, but did work on his throwing arm during practices.

Prescott would sit on a stool and throw passes to wide receivers in one-on-one and seven-on-seven drills.

Walk-on quarterbacks **Sam Cowart** and **Josh Hand** got a lot of playing time in the spring because of Prescott's injury.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

On the state of the program: "I think this is a pivotal year. I'm just going to say it — Coach (Sylvester) Croom had cleaned up a bunch of stuff at Mississippi State and recruited well, and sometimes he doesn't get credit for that. Dan Mullen did a good job with those guys and recruited on top of that. Now it's all his guys, so we'll see where it's at."

On the defense: "One of the things that helped them the last two years — they were pretty good up front and good in the secondary. They had four safeties and two corners. They lost all of them. It's hard to be good on defense if you're not good on the back end. I wouldn't be surprised if they won eight, but I don't think they'll be as good a football team as they were last year."

Gabe Jackson
Photo by AP Photo/Stephen Morton

winning cornerback Johnthan Banks and his steady counterpart Darius Slay. Both were remarkably consistent during their time at Mississippi State.

Their expected replacements are juniors Justin Cox, a highly regarded junior college transfer, and Jamerson Love, who has limited experience. Cox — 6-3, 195-pounds — has NFL talent and had a fantastic spring, but still experienced a few hiccups getting used to a new playbook.

They will both get some help over the top with free safety Nickoe Whitley, who had 88 tackles last season, and strong safety Jay Hughes. Collins noted after the spring game that Whitley had stepped up as a vocal leader with Banks and Slay gone.

Defensive end Denico Autry leads a talented and deep defensive line. Autry picked up in the spring right where he left off last season and looked poised to have a monster 2013 season. At the other end position, Preston Smith is the expected starter, but Ryan Brown figures to get a lot of playing time.

Five-star defensive end Chris Jones will also make a push for playing time in his freshman year.

Kaleb Eulls, who played two seasons at defensive end, is now a starter at defensive tackle. Coaches loved the idea of moving an athletic, big guy like Eulls inside and he had a very strong spring. P.J. Jones is the other starter, but keep an eye out for sophomore Nick James. The 6-5, 345-pound behemoth started to put it together at the end of spring and might have the most talent of anyone on the line.

Benardrick McKinney is the expected leader of a linebacker group that needs to replace senior leader Cam Lawrence, who had more than 120 tackles in consecutive seasons. Collins believes he has eight SEC caliber linebackers and will likely mix and match all through summer until he finds a good combination.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Devon Bell had an up-and-down 2012 season, but finished on a relatively strong note.

The sophomore hit 66.7 percent of his field goal attempts and was 4 of 7

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Tyler Russell

Threw for 2,897 yards and 24 touchdowns in 2012. ... The fifth-year senior was given more responsibility in play-calling and direction of the offense in the spring. ... Faced no serious competition in the spring with Dak Prescott out. ... Lost three favorite receivers from last year. ... Struggled at the end of last season with six interceptions in last two games. ... Worked under center more this spring to vary the spread offense. ... Offense will go as far as Russell can carry it.

EMERGING STAR

DE Denico Autry

Had one tackle and two QB hurries in spring game. ... Started off slow last season, but finished on a tear with three tackles for loss and two sacks in last four games. ... Defensive coordinator Geoff Collins thought Autry had the best finish to 2012 of any SEC defensive lineman. ... Clear leader on talented defensive line. ... Has the speed and strength to consistently pressure quarterbacks off the edge. ... Looked bigger and stronger in spring. ... Finished last season with 42 tackles and four sacks in 13 games.

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Justin Cox

A junior transfer who arrived this spring from East Mississippi Junior College. ... Emerged as one of the most game-ready defensive backs during the spring. ... Was ranked a four-star prospect ... Played safety and cornerback at East Mississippi, but is expected to start alongside Jamerson Love at cornerback position. ... Has NFL talent, but still getting adjusted to a new playbook and SEC speed. ... One of the fastest players on the team and could get some time as a punt returner.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.0	48
Rushing	214.9	16
Passing	186.5	86
Total	401.3	42
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.9	21
Rushing	119.1	15
Passing	237.8	91
Total	356.9	49
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.54	27

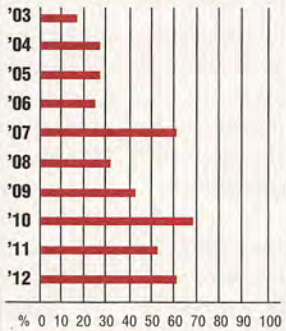
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.3	73
Rushing	175.3	38
Passing	181.9	94
Total	357.2	84
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.7	16
Rushing	153.5	61
Passing	197.2	27
Total	350.6	35
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
0	+ 0.0	59

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.5	60
Rushing	144.2	82
Passing	237.7	58
Total	381.9	79
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.3	34
Rushing	165.5	67
Passing	221.8	45
Total	387.3	52
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 16	+ 1.23	5

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

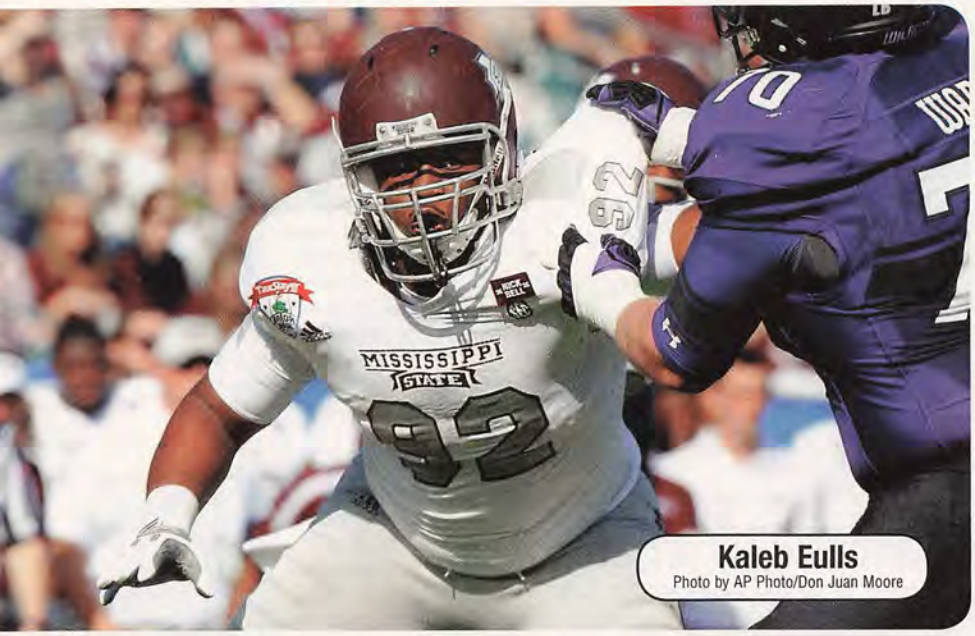


RESULTS

8-5, 4-4

W	JACKSON STATE	56-9
W	AUBURN	28-10
W	at Troy	30-24
W	SOUTH ALABAMA	30-10
W	at Kentucky	27-14
W	TENNESSEE	41-31
W	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	45-3
L	at Alabama	7-38
L	TEXAS A&M	13-38
L	at LSU	17-37
W	ARKANSAS	45-14
L	at Ole Miss	24-41
	Gator Bowl	
L	vs. Northwestern	20-34

PLAYER PROFILE



Kaleb Eulls
Photo by AP Photo/Don Juan Moore

Selfless Eulls Finds His Spot at Tackle

Kaleb Eulls is a starting SEC defensive tackle, but worldwide he is better known for an act of courage.

In 2009, Eulls made national headlines when he tackled a gun-wielding female classmate on a bus heading to Yazoo County High School. Eulls, then a high school quarterback, helped shepherd 22 young children off the bus before tackling the girl and saving the day.

He was interviewed on NBC's Today Show, profiled in *Sports Illustrated* and on ESPN, and universally beloved for his heroism.

People continue to come up to Eulls and ask him about the experience.

"It is surprising people still talk about it a whole lot," Eulls said. "I'm trying to be a great role model still. People ask about what happened in that situation and I just tell them how it felt."

Eulls said that he "cares more about others than myself" and that's what led him into action on that fateful Sept. 1 morning.

This past spring Eulls continued that selfless streak by moving to defensive tackle after two years as a defensive end. Coaches liked that the 6-4, 290-pound junior had the size to be a run-stopper in the middle, but also the speed and athleticism to get pressure on the quarterback.

At the start of spring Eulls was slow to adapt to the new move. He admitted it took some time getting used to being double-teamed more often in the middle, and figuring out his spacing. He looked off-kilter.

"We've messed around with him and moved him around in the past, and I think now he's settling in there," coach Dan Mullen said. "Part of it is going to be getting comfortable with his weight too. He's added about 10 pounds and (learning) to be comfortable with that 10 pounds."

Eulls settled down and by the end of spring looked like he had been playing defensive tackle all his life. He had a sack and a tackle for a loss against the first-team offense in the spring game, and got constant pressure on fifth-year senior quarterback Tyler Russell.

"Now he looks comfortable," said defensive coordinator Geoff Collins. "He's in his spot. The game has slowed down for him now that he's in there."

Defensive line coach David Turner noticed the same thing.

"I can tell now he's a whole lot more comfortable inside than he was at the first part of spring," Turner said. "He's come along nice."

from longer than 40 yards. He had a shaky spring, but coaches hope he can improve come summer.

Punter Baker Swedenburg is a consistent and effective punter, averaging 41.1 yards a kick last season.

The biggest special teams question is who assumes the role of starting punt returner. Last season, cornerback Johnthan Banks and wide receiver Chad Bumphis handled the duties, but both are gone.

Wide receiver Jameon Lewis and defensive back Justin Cox are the favorites heading into summer. Lewis is also the expected starting kick returner.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Mississippi State won't have much time to harp on last season's disappointing finish.

The Bulldogs open 2013 with a serious test in Big 12 favorite Oklahoma State in the Texas Kickoff Classic in Houston. The outcome of that opening game could have a major impact on the type of season Mississippi State has.

An early road trip to Auburn on Sept. 14 could also be huge.

The good news this year is that three of Mississippi State's toughest games will be at home. MSU will host LSU on Oct. 5, Alabama on Nov. 16 and Ole Miss on Thanksgiving Nov. 28.

The Bulldogs also managed to avoid Florida and Georgia this year, but will have to travel to South Carolina in what should be a difficult game.

— John Talty

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	vs. Oklahoma State (Houston)	8-5
Sept. 7	ALCORN STATE	4-7
Sept. 14	at Auburn	3-9
Sept. 21	TROY	5-7
Oct. 5	LSU	10-3
Oct. 12	BOWLING GREEN	8-5
Oct. 24	KENTUCKY	2-10
Nov. 2	at South Carolina	11-2
Nov. 9	at Texas A&M	11-2
Nov. 16	ALABAMA	13-1
Nov. 23	at Arkansas	4-8
Nov. 28	OLE MISS	7-6

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MISSOURI TIGERS

For more coverage of the Tigers, visit missouri.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Josh Henson **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dave Steckel** **STADIUM: Memorial Stadium/Faurot Field: 71,004**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
5-7 overall, 2-6 SEC (5th, East)

COACH:
Gary Pinkel — At Missouri: 90-61, 12 years; overall: 163-98-3, 22 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 8 offense, 6 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB James Franklin, TB Henry Josey, WR Dorial Green-Beckham, C Evan Boehm, DE Kony Ealy, MLB Andrew Wilson, CB E.J. Gaines

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Whoever wins the quarterback competition has some dangerous weapons, led by Green-Beckham. Tailback could become a committee approach, but the Tigers have strength in numbers with capable starters Russell Hansbrough, Marcus Murphy and Josey, a former All-Big 12 back. The offensive line is stable for the first time in two years. Gaines might be the best at his position in the conference.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The Tigers need to form an identity on offense under first-year coordinator Josh Henson, but he must settle on a quarterback first. If the competition lingers deep into August, it could affect continuity during training camp. There's not much established depth at defensive tackle or in the secondary. Does Missouri have enough playmakers on defense?

KEY LOSSES:
RB Kendial Lawrence, WR T.J. Moe, LT Elvis Fisher, DT Sheldon Richardson, LB Zaviar Gooden, LB Will Ebner, CB Kip Edwards

OVERVIEW:
Missouri is lacking momentum heading into its sophomore SEC season, but the Tigers have enough talent to regain some credibility and get back to the postseason. New offensive coordinator Josh Henson hopes to have some answers to fix a sagging attack, but he'll need a quarterback to emerge in August. Last year's defensive meltdown was overshadowed by the problems on offense, but the Tigers need to trade punches with SEC counterparts to have a fighter's chance at a winning record.

Provin' Time: Bounce-back Year Badly Needed

So many unexpected things befell Gary Pinkel's program in 2012.

His starting quarterback suffered four different injuries that sidelined him for all or parts of six games. His offensive line was riddled with ailments all season. One of the country's most prolific spread offenses became one of the country's most feeble attacks.

And shortly after Missouri finished 5-7 — the Tigers' first losing season in eight years — offensive coordinator and longtime Pinkel assistant David Yost stepped down.

But as Pinkel began the process of restoring the program's credibility, he insisted Missouri's biggest change in 2012 was no surprise at all.

"I'm going to be very honest: The SEC's no different than I thought it would be," he said this spring.

"Obviously, we didn't do as well. It was a very difficult year. We all know that. But I feel very good about our program. ... We're doing a lot of good things here. And I would suggest that we all are a bit driven because it was the first time in eight years we didn't go to a bowl game.

"I think we have a lot to prove. And that's good."

A year ago, as the Tigers prepared for their debut season in the Southeastern Conference, they were one of six schools from the major conferences to win at least eight games in the previous six seasons. MU's 48 wins from 2006 to 2011 ranked ninth among teams in BCS automatic qualifying leagues.

But last year's depth and talent couldn't sustain the injury setbacks that occurred during one of the country's most grueling schedules. Despite losing their best player a year early to the NFL Draft — All-SEC defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson — the Tigers have optimism that things will get better and another bowl streak will begin.

OFFENSE

Co-offensive line coach Josh Henson is the new coordinator. Missouri will still run a no-huddle spread offense, but certain elements have changed.

He plans to expand the role of MU's tight ends. The quarterback will rarely be stranded in an empty backfield formation. Tailbacks will run more north and south, taking fewer horizontal angles to the point of attack. The biggest change could come at quarterback.

James Franklin was coming off a promising sophomore season when he tore the labrum in his throwing shoulder last March. He made it back for the start of the season, but was never the same player from 2011.

He suffered a separated shoulder injury against Georgia, then sat out two weeks with a knee strain and missed the season finale with a concussion. When healthy, his play was spotty enough that MU opened the quarterback job for competition, and Franklin split spring reps evenly with Maty Mauk and sophomore Corbin Berkstresser, who struggled in relief of Franklin last season.

Franklin's spring scrimmage statistics were the best of the three, but MU coaches insisted the competition will continue into preseason camp.

Mauk is the fan favorite, having the luxury of not contributing to last year's disastrous season that saw MU rank among the least efficient passing offenses in the country.

"When you're switching quarterbacks ... the continuity's going to suffer a little bit," Pinkel said after a ragged spring game. "But I think we've got the making of a really good offensive football team."

The emergence of sophomore receiver

Dorial Green-Beckham
Photo by Jim Dedmon/Icon SMI

Dorial Green-Beckham is a big reason why. Hailed as the nation's No. 1 recruit when he arrived last year, Green-Beckham was barely a factor the first two months of the season.

He surfaced as a big-play threat during the final stretch, but under new receivers coach Pat Washington, and with Henson changing aspects of MU's passing game, Green-Beckham flourished this spring, catching a team-best 18 passes for 266 yards in three scrimmages. He has moved to outside receiver after splitting time in the slot last year.

"He can turn an average play into a big play, and I think we're starting to see how really good he can be," Pinkel said.

Green-Beckham, a rare combination of size (6-6, 220) and sprinter's speed, joins a veteran receiver corps that includes senior outside weapons Marcus Lucas and L'Damian Washington, and slot threats Bud Sasser and Jimmie Hunt. Redshirt freshman Sean Culkin, another rangy target at 6-6, could boost the passing attack after missing last year with a broken finger.

The feel-good story of 2013 will be the healthy return of tailback Henry Josey, whose 2011 All-American campaign was interrupted in November when he wrecked every significant part to his left knee. Sixteen months later, he took part in all three spring scrimmages — running without a knee brace — and was locked in a race with Marcus Murphy and Russell Hansbrough for the No. 1 job.

"You'll see him very similar or better than what he was," Pinkel said.

MU hopes to be past last year's offensive line nightmares, too. Injuries knocked out four starters for stretches as the Tigers scrambled their starting combination from week to week.

Evan Boehm's offseason move from left guard to center gives the line a reliable anchor, while Justin Britt's rapid return from November ACL surgery puts the team's most experienced lineman at the crucial left tackle position. The coaches were thrilled with the spring performance of right guard Connor McGovern, the only new starter along the front five.

DEFENSE

For the first couple months of 2012, Missouri usually looked the part of an SEC defense, trading blows with powerhouses Georgia and Florida and ranking in the top half of most league statistics. Things unraveled in the last three weeks as Tennessee, Syracuse and Texas A&M ravaged MU for 138 points and 1,740 yards.

But with Sheldon Richardson off to the NFL and four other starters departed, the Tigers seek redemption.

"We probably didn't stay together as a defense as much as we'd like to," said cornerback E.J. Gaines, an All-SEC can-

James Franklin
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	James Franklin*	Sr.	Must hold off backup candidates after injury-ravaged year.	Maty Mauk, Fr.
RB	Marcus Murphy	Jr.	Tigers figure to split carries among top three backs.	Russell Hansbrough, So.
WR	Dorial Green-Beckham	So.	Emerged as MU's best playmaker after rocky freshman year.	Marcus Lucas, Sr.*
WR	L'Damian Washington*	Sr.	Team's fastest wideout is big-play threat.	Jaleel Clark, Sr.
WR	Bud Sasser	Jr.	Shares spot with backup Hunt to form potent slot tandem.	Jimmie Hunt, Jr.
TE	Eric Waters*	Sr.	MU hopes to expand roles for TEs, add blocking duties.	Sean Culkin, Fr.
LT	Justin Britt*	Sr.	MU's most seasoned blocker, coming off ACL surgery.	Anthony Gatti, Jr.
LG	Max Copeland*	Sr.	Former walk-on undersized, but brings toughness inside.	Mitch Hall, So.
C	Evan Boehm*	So.	Converted guard could be long-term anchor in the middle.	Robert Luce, Jr.
RG	Connor McGovern	So.	First-year starter coming off impressive spring.	Brad McNulty, So.
RT	Mitch Morse*	Jr.	Played better on edge after failed experiment at center.	Taylor Chappell, So.
PK	Andrew Baggett*	So.	Former walk-on helped win 4-OT thriller at Tennessee.	Nick Coffman, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Kony Ealy*	Jr.	His 10 tackles for loss leads all returning players.	Shane Ray, So.
DT	Lucas Vincent	Jr.	First in line to replace departed star Sheldon Richardson.	Marvin Foster, Sr.
DT	Matt Hoch*	Jr.	Former tight end showed flashes in new role last year.	Harold Brantley, Fr.
DE	Michael Sam*	Sr.	More career sacks (9.5), tackles for loss (17) than any teammate.	Brayden Burnett, Sr.
LB	Donovan Bonner	Sr.	Part-time starter last year; team-best six career forced fumbles.	Clarence Green, So.
LB	Andrew Wilson*	Sr.	Big hitter led Tigers in tackles last two years.	Michael Scherer, Fr.
LB	Darvin Ruise	Jr.	Former prep QB will get tested from young backups.	Kentrell Brothers, So.
CB	E.J. Gaines*	Sr.	Team's most experienced player, All-Big 12 in 2011.	John Gibson, Fr.
CB	Randy Ponder	Sr.	Former walk-on will have to hold off promising underclassmen.	David Johnson, So.
SS	Matt White	Sr.	Undersized, better pass defender than run stopper.	Ian Simon, So.
FS	Braylon Webb*	Jr.	Seasoned with 16 career starts, but MU needs more big plays.	Cortland Browning, So.
P	Christian Brinser	Jr.	Walk-on candidate must replace steady veteran Trey Barrow.	Blake Owens, Jr.

*Returning Starter

TIGERS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Josh Augusta
To compete in the SEC, Missouri has to have high profile defensive linemen. Augusta chose the Tigers over a dozen other offers, including Michigan, Oklahoma and Notre Dame. He is expected to play defensive tackle at Missouri, which is perhaps the biggest position of need. If he hits campus in good shape, Augusta could see the field very early.

Eddie Printz
After parting ways with UCLA, the Georgia quarterback chose the Tigers. One of two QB's in the class, Printz could be Mizzou's signal caller of the future. He is likely to take a redshirt in his first year on campus, but is one to watch down the road.

Duron Singleton
One of the top junior college safeties in the country, Singleton should compete for a starting role the second he sets foot on campus. Singleton was one of the last additions to the Tigers' class, but also perhaps the most important.

THE SLEEPER

Charles Harris
Is the definition of a sleeper. Prior to getting an offer in the final days before National Signing Day from Mizzou, the Lincoln Prep star was planning to play at Missouri Western. Harris is incredibly raw, but has athleticism to burn. The definition of a project, Tiger fans will want to file Harris' name away as an under-the-radar addition to the class.

Committments	20
Average Stars	3.00
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	1
★★★☆☆	18
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	60
National Rank: 41	SEC: 14

2014 NEEDS: Missouri hit the offensive and defensive lines hard in 2013 and is expected to do so again in 2014. In addition, Mizzou will likely add two tight ends and multiple receivers to restock the passing game. Running back is also a position of focus as the Tigers' 2014 class could be very heavy on the offensive side of things.

— By Gabriel Dearmond/ Powermizzou.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Chase Abbington	ATH	6-4	210	★★★★	St. Peters, MO	Fort Zumwalt South
Abbington is a big athlete who could play on either side of the ball, but should start out at running back. However, chances are he'll have a two-year stop in junior college before being a Tiger.						
Alec Abeln	OL	6-4	275	★★★	St. Louis, MO	University
Abeln is the No. 15 center in the country and should play on the interior of the Tigers' offensive line, whether it be center or guard.						
Josh Augusta	DT	6-5	275	★★★	Peoria, IL	Peoria
Augusta is one of the most pursued players in Missouri's class and should slide inside to compete for immediate time at defensive tackle.						
Eric Beisel	LB	6-4	235	★★★	Fenton, MO	Rockwood Summit
Beisel is a big, physical linebacker who should play in the middle. He was the No. 9 rated player in the state in 2013.						
Joe Burkett	LB	6-3	200	★★★	Jefferson City, MO	Jefferson City
Burkett also ran track in high school and is a terrific athlete who some think could be a safety, but will likely add weight to become an SEC linebacker.						
Nate Crawford	DE	6-4	260	★★★	Pensacola, FL	West Florida Tech
Crawford had eight total scholarship offers out of high school. He could be a big defensive end or add strength and size to move inside on the line.						
Hameet Gill	OL	6-7	260	★★★	St. Charles, MO	Francis Howell School
Gill battled injuries that derailed his senior season in high school, but is an athletic tackle prospect for the Tigers.						
Charles Harris	DE	6-4	220	★★	Kansas City, MO	Lincoln College Prep
Harris came out of nowhere late to grab a scholarship offer from Mizzou. A good basketball player, he's got athleticism, but will need time to develop into a college football player.						
Trent Hosick	QB	6-2	215	★★★	Kansas City, MO	Staley
Hosick is not yet a polished passer, but Missouri loves his athleticism, toughness and leadership at the quarterback position. He is the No. 19 rated dual-threat QB in the class.						
A.J. Logan	DT	6-2	310	★★★	Columbia, MO	Rock Bridge
Logan was a dominant defensive tackle in high school who could compete very quickly for time at a position of need for the Tigers.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Marcus Loud	DE	6-4	235	★★★	Houston, TX	Wheatley
Loud committed to Missouri twice, with a brief commitment to Colorado in between. He is the No. 27 defensive end in the country.						
J-Mon Moore	WR	6-3	178	★★★	Missouri City, TX	Elkins
Moore is the lone wideout in Missouri's class and was the No. 82 overall prospect in the state of Texas.						
Aarion Penton	ATH	5-9	165	★★★	St. Louis, MO	Christian Brothers College High
Penton was Mizzou's first commitment in the class and is likely to start out at cornerback in college.						
Eddie Printz	QB	6-4	212	★★★	Marietta, GA	Lassiter
Printz graduated early and went through spring football with the Tigers, giving him a head start in his efforts to be Mizzou's quarterback of the future.						
Jason Reese	TE	6-4	220	★★★	Euless, TX	Trinity
With just two scholarship tight ends on the roster, Reese could compete for playing time as a true freshman. Chose Mizzou over five other BCS offers.						
Clay Rhodes	OL	6-6	265	★★★	Stilwell, KS	Blue Valley
Rhodes is the headliner of the offensive line class and was the No. 3 overall prospect in the state of Kansas.						
Shaun Rupert	DB	6-2	180	★★★	Montgomery, AL	Carver
Rupert had 16 offers as a senior in high school. He is expected to be a safety for Mizzou.						
Anthony Sherrils	ATH	6-1	174	★★★	Kansas City, MO	Hogan Prep
Sherrils is a versatile athlete who could play on either side of the ball, but he will be a defensive back for the Tigers. He was the No. 8 player in the state of Missouri.						
Duron Singleton	DB	6-1	210	★★★	Fresno, CA	Fresno City C.C.
Singleton is one of the country's top junior college safeties and fills a need for the Tigers. He could compete for a starting role right away.						
Antar Thompson	DT	6-3	295	★★★	Maplewood, MO	Maplewood Richmond Heights
Thompson is an athletic defensive tackle, but will go the junior college route for the next couple of years.						

TIGERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
99	Andrew Baggett	PK	6-2	220	So.	Lee's Summit
13	Corbin Berkstresser	QB	6-3	225	So.	Lee's Summit
67	Michael Boddie	OL	6-5	295	So.	Gilmer, TX
77	Evan Boehm	OL	6-3	315	So.	Lee's Summit
10	Brock Bondurant	S	6-2	215	Fr.	Memphis
8	Donovan Bonner	LB	6-1	240	Sr.	Dallas, TX
11	Torey Boozer	LB	6-2	230	Fr.	Everman, TX
90	Harold Brantley	DL	6-3	300	Fr.	Hershey, PA
54	Michael Brennan	LB	6-2	235	Sr.	Kahoka
26	Jake Brents	WR	6-3	200	Fr.	Springfield
92	Christian Brinser	P	6-1	200	Jr.	Liberty
68	Justin Britt	OL	6-6	320	Sr.	Lebanon
10	Kentrell Brothers	LB	6-1	235	So.	Guthrie, OK
5	Cortland Browning	S	6-1	210	So.	Tyler, TX
55	Brayden Burnett	DL	6-2	245	Sr.	Southlake, TX
99	David Butler	DL	6-4	280	Jr.	Kansas City
51	Stephen Carberry	OL	6-4	300	Jr.	Belleville, IL
12	Colby Carpenter	QB	6-2	220	Fr.	Dallas, TX
43	Cameron Chancey	WR	6-0	180	So.	Branson
62	Taylor Chappell	OL	6-5	320	So.	Canadian, TX
14	Jaleel Clark	WR	6-4	220	Sr.	Allentown, PA
90	Nick Coffman	PK	5-11	170	Fr.	Houston, TX
84	Brandon Colbert	TE	6-3	225	Jr.	Troy
61	Max Copeland	OL	6-3	295	Sr.	Billings, MT
16	Levi Copelin	WR	6-2	185	Fr.	Broken Arrow, OK
80	Sean Culkin	TE	6-6	240	Fr.	Indian Rocks Beach, FL
45	Tyler Davis	DB	6-0	200	Sr.	Eldon
17	Alex Demczak	QB	6-0	200	Jr.	Springfield, IL
78	Nick Demien	OL	6-6	300	Jr.	Wentzville
10	Miles Drummond	TB	5-11	215	Fr.	Centralia
47	Kony Ealy	DL	6-5	275	Jr.	New Madrid
4	Daniel Easterly	S	6-4	215	Jr.	Detroit, MI
98	Clayton Echard	DL	6-5	260	So.	Eureka
46	Jared Edwards	DB	5-10	195	Fr.	Lake Ozark
29	Zach Edwards	DB	5-9	190	Fr.	Lake Ozark
94	Marvin Foster	DL	6-1	290	Sr.	Fort Worth, TX
79	Adam Franklin	OL	6-0	265	So.	Raytown
1	James Franklin	QB	6-2	230	Sr.	Corinth, TX
74	Chris Freeman	OL	6-8	335	Jr.	Trotwood, OH
31	E.J. Gaines	DB	5-10	195	Sr.	Independence
70	Anthony Gatti	OL	6-6	315	Jr.	St. Louis
17	Sheldon Gerau	WR	6-0	200	So.	Columbia
1	John Gibson	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Missouri City, TX
18	Michael Godas	S	6-0	210	So.	Columbia
33	Markus Golden	DL	6-3	255	Jr.	St. Louis
71	Justin Grava	OL	6-3	260	Fr.	Alpharetta, GA
40	Clarence Green	LB	6-0	225	So.	Clute, TX
15	Dorial Green-Beckham	WR	6-6	220	So.	Springfield
73	Mitch Hall	OL	6-5	320	So.	Russellville, AR
69	Mitch Hall	OL	6-1	285	So.	Burnsville, MN
32	Russell Hansbrough	TB	5-9	185	So.	Arlington, TX
95	Rickey Hatley	DL	6-4	260	Fr.	Atlanta, TX
89	Matt Hoch	DL	6-5	295	Jr.	Harlan, IA
11	Trent Hosick	QB	6-1	230	Fr.	Kansas City
43	Tanner Hull	LB	6-0	215	Fr.	Kansas City
88	Jimmie Hunt	WR	6-1	215	Jr.	Cahokia, IL
35	Tyler Hunt	TB	5-11	210	Jr.	Westran
86	Jake Hurrell	TE	6-3	235	Fr.	Saint Peters
3	David Johnson	DB	5-11	190	So.	Spring, TX
20	Henry Josey	TB	5-10	190	Jr.	Angleton, TX
16	Eric Laurent	QB	6-3	205	Fr.	Ballwin
18	Wesley Leftwich	WR	6-1	195	So.	Columbia
64	Keric Lickerman	DL	6-3	235	So.	Wildwood
85	Marcus Lucas	WR	6-5	220	Sr.	Liberty
56	Robert Luce	OL	6-2	300	Jr.	Dallas, TX
51	Steven Mack	DL	6-0	245	Jr.	Chicago, IL
49	Denzel Martin	LB	5-10	230	Sr.	Ladue
7	Maty Mauk	QB	6-1	200	Fr.	Kenton, OH
60	Connor McGovern	OL	6-4	315	So.	Fargo, ND
63	Brad McNulty	OL	6-4	305	So.	Allen, TX
54	Nick Monaghan	OL	6-2	245	So.	Darien, IL
65	Mitch Morse	OL	6-5	305	Jr.	Austin, TX
6	Marcus Murphy	TB	5-9	185	Jr.	DeSoto, TX
25	Donavin Newsom	LB	6-2	230	Fr.	St. Louis
87	Gavin Otte	WR	5-11	200	Jr.	Rolla
91	Blake Owens	PK	5-11	200	Jr.	Kansas City
28	Ernest Payton	SS	6-2	210	So.	College Station, TX
46	Kyle Peasel	TE	6-3	230	Sr.	Troy
7	Randy Ponder	DB	5-10	190	Sr.	Edmond, OK
9	Eddie Printz	QB	6-3	210	Fr.	Marietta, GA
56	Shane Ray	DL	6-3	245	So.	Shawnee Mission, KS
12	Darvin Ruise	LB	6-1	245	Jr.	Glen St. Mary, FL
52	Michael Sam	DL	6-3	255	Sr.	Hitchcock, TX
21	Bud Sasser	WR	6-2	210	Jr.	Denton, TX
30	Michael Scherer	LB	6-3	235	Fr.	St. Louis
21	Ian Simon	S	5-11	195	So.	Mansfield, TX
26	Xavier Smith	DB	5-11	185	Jr.	Edmond, OK
22	David Sowell	DB	5-10	185	Fr.	Homewood, IL
59	Kyle Starke	OL	6-4	310	So.	Liberty
41	Andrew Stevens	TB	5-9	195	Fr.	St. Louis
36	Morgan Steward	TB	6-0	215	Fr.	Kansas City
38	Reid Swearingen	QB	6-3	190	Fr.	Sedalia
96	Lucas Vincent	DL	6-2	305	Jr.	Olathe, KS
33	Jordan Wade	DB	5-9	195	Jr.	Lee's Summit
19	Chaston Ward	S	6-1	205	Fr.	Cleburne, TX
2	L'Damian Washington	WR	6-4	200	Sr.	Shreveport, LA
81	Eric Waters	TE	6-4	245	Sr.	Mansfield, TX
9	Braylon Webb	S	6-0	205	Jr.	Gilmer, TX
8	Darius White	WR	6-3	200	Jr.	Fort Worth, TX
24	Greg White	TB	6-1	215	Jr.	DeQueen, AR
17	Matt White	S	6-0	195	Sr.	Keller, TX
76	Jordan Williams	OL	6-2	275	Fr.	Denton, TX
48	Andrew Wilson	LB	6-3	235	Sr.	Peculiar
50	Evan Winston	DL	6-3	300	Fr.	Muskegon Heights, MI

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Franklin	9	123.59	139	234	7	59.4	1562	10	80	173.6
C. Berkstresser	10	101.39	88	177	7	49.7	1059	5	85	105.9

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Lucas	12	46	509	11.1	3	41	42.4
T.J. Moe	12	40	399	10.0	1	27	33.2
G. McGaffie	12	33	266	8.1	0	24	22.2

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Lawrence	12	200	1102	77	1025	5.1	12	77	85.4
M. Murphy	12	46	258	7	251	5.5	1	25	20.9
R. Hansbrough	9	37	156	17	139	3.8	0	14	15.4

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: A. Wilson 79, W. Ebner 75, S. Richardson 75
Tackles for loss: W. Ebner 10.5, S. Richardson 10.5, K. Ealy 10
Sacks: M. Sam 4.5, S. Richardson 4, B. Madison 4
Interceptions: K. Edwards 2, five tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Quarterback **James Franklin** spent his spring break in San Diego working with esteemed quarterback guru George Whitfield Jr., who's worked with NFL passers Andrew Luck and Cam Newton and last year tutored Texas A&M Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel.

Under Whitfield's watch, Franklin worked on his footwork and delivery but didn't dramatically change his mechanics. "We really just tweaked and modified some things," Whitfield said.

• Missouri's offensive staff got a makeover in the offseason.

Offensive line coach **Josh Henson** took over the coordinator duties. **Andy Hill** shifted from receivers to quarterbacks and former Kentucky assistant **Pat Washington** joined the staff to coach receivers. For Hill, entering his 18th consecutive season on the staff, he consulted with several colleagues during the offseason to learn about coaching QBs.

"I think I'll coach a little different," he said. "I used to be flying around; now you've got to be a little more cerebral. I've enjoyed the change."

• Recruiting stalled some this offseason as two high-profile St. Louis targets, both once committed to Missouri, announced they were looking elsewhere.

Andy Bauer, an offensive lineman from DeSmet High School, changed his pledge from Missouri to Ole Miss, while Markel Smith, a running back from Vianney High School, opened his recruitment and was considering Iowa and Ole Miss, along with Missouri.

MU ended spring practices with five players committed for the 2014 recruiting class, including **Darnell Green-Beckham,** the younger brother of sophomore receiver **Dorial Green-Beckham**.

• The west side tower at Memorial Stadium has been under construction since the winter and will be remodeled in time for the season. Also, the hill behind the north end zone was bulldozed and rebuilt to make for an expanded concourse at the stadium's north entrance.

The Rock M behind the north end zone will remain a fixture at Faurot Field but will be repositioned closer to the field surface. The east side of the stadium is under a massive expansion plan and should be complete for 2014.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On adjusting to the SEC:** "They're changing their offense. I think they figured out last year they needed to. The speed and physical nature of the front sevens in the SEC was different from what they were used to on a week in, week out basis. I think they were a little shocked by some of the teams they played early — Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama. Somewhere, they realized what they were doing wasn't going to work in this league, but it was too late to change, too hard to change."

• **On this year's team:** "If they can keep the quarterback (James Franklin) healthy, I think they'll score some points. Defensively, they lost a good defensive lineman (Sheldon Richardson) and a couple of linebackers. All that being said, I think they'll have a hard time being bowl eligible in the SEC."

E.J. Gaines
Photo by AP Photo/L.G. Patterson

didate. "We kind of started falling apart as the season went along. It was tough."

Missouri's deepest position remains defensive end, where returning starters Michael Sam and Kony Ealy, both productive 1-on-1 pass-rushers, return along the edges. Shane Ray, a blur at just 245 pounds, is a speed rusher the coaches will find ways to get on the field, especially on third down.

There's less experience inside, but returning nose guard Matt Hoch put together a strong spring, as did first-year starter Lucas Vincent, a 295-pound mauler and former high school wrestling champion.

"He's got a lot more in him than what we're getting," Pinkel said of Vincent, "but we're seeing a lot more of it now."

The Tigers must replace weakside linebacker and NFL draft pick Zaviar Gooden, along with middle linebacker Will Ebner, but Andrew Wilson, the team's most seasoned and physical tackler, shifts inside to patrol the middle.

The coaches challenged Wilson this offseason to become more of a vocal leader, but they'll especially need him as a run-stopper after giving up an SEC-worst 26 rushing TDs last season. Donovan Bonner, a versatile spot-starter in the past, gets the call on the strong side, while junior Darvin Ruise, a former prep quarterback, will compete with sophomore Kentrell Brothers, a speedy special teams contributor last season, for the No. 1 job on the weak side.

Gaines headlines a secondary in need of more playmakers. David Johnson, a standout prep hurdler in Texas, had a breakthrough spring and could eclipse senior Randy Ponder for the other cornerback job. John Gibson, a redshirt freshman, will be in the mix, too, to start opposite Gaines, a rugged tackler in the open field and the best 1-on-1 defender Pinkel has coached at the position at MU.

Braylon Webb, the leading candidate at free safety, has started 16 games but hasn't made many game-changing plays. Ian Simon will challenge Matt White for the strong safety job. Incoming junior college transfer Duron Singleton could figure into the competition at either position.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Marcus Murphy became a special teams spark last year.

The shifty 5-9 tailback ranked second in the SEC in punt return average and fifth in kickoff return average and took a school record four returns to the end zone, including a 98-yard kickoff

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

WR Dorial Green-Beckham

Gary Pinkel's biggest recruiting catch was barely visible through the first couple months of the 2012 season. Then came an embarrassing arrest for marijuana possession and an ensuing one-game suspension. ... But Green-Beckham looked more like the nation's No. 1 recruit over the final five games, when he caught 21 of his 28 passes and four of his five touchdowns. ... Moved from the slot to the outside, Green-Beckham was clearly the team's best playmaker this spring. ... New coordinator Josh Henson has pledged to get him the ball more.

EMERGING STAR

DE Kony Ealy

From Ziggy Hood to Aldon Smith to Sheldon Richardson, the Tigers have a tradition of developing first-round NFL draft picks. Ealy, a chiseled 6-5, 275-pound specimen on the edge, has the potential to be the next. ... Ealy made 10 tackles behind the line last year, including 3.5 sacks, and batted down seven passes. ... With Richardson off to the NFL, MU's coaches will shift Ealy inside on passing downs and match him against slower offensive guards.

TOP NEWCOMER

TE Sean Culkin

Last August, Culkin looked like MU's most polished freshman. But a broken finger sidelined the 6-6 target for the entire season. ... With a new plan to employ tight ends in a variety of roles — split wide, attached to the line and in the backfield — a healthy Culkin fits the mold and could become a valuable weapon in the passing game. ... Ranked as the nation's No. 24 tight end prospect by Rivals.com out of high school, and the No. 62 prospect in Florida.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.9	43
Rushing	156.4	57
Passing	253.2	33
Total	409.6	35
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	16.1	6
Rushing	152.9	62
Passing	203.5	37
Total	356.4	47
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 11	+ 0.85	15

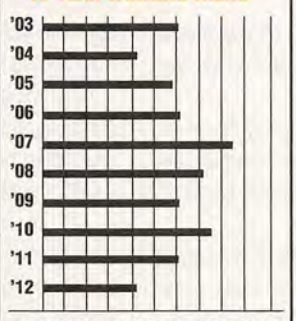
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.9	30
Rushing	244.0	9
Passing	231.5	64
Total	475.5	12
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.5	44
Rushing	127.4	29
Passing	252.6	94
Total	380.0	61
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 3	+ 0.23	40

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.8	80
Rushing	138.5	88
Passing	217.9	76
Total	356.4	96
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.4	68
Rushing	149.3	49
Pass	241.4	74
Total	390.7	58
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	55

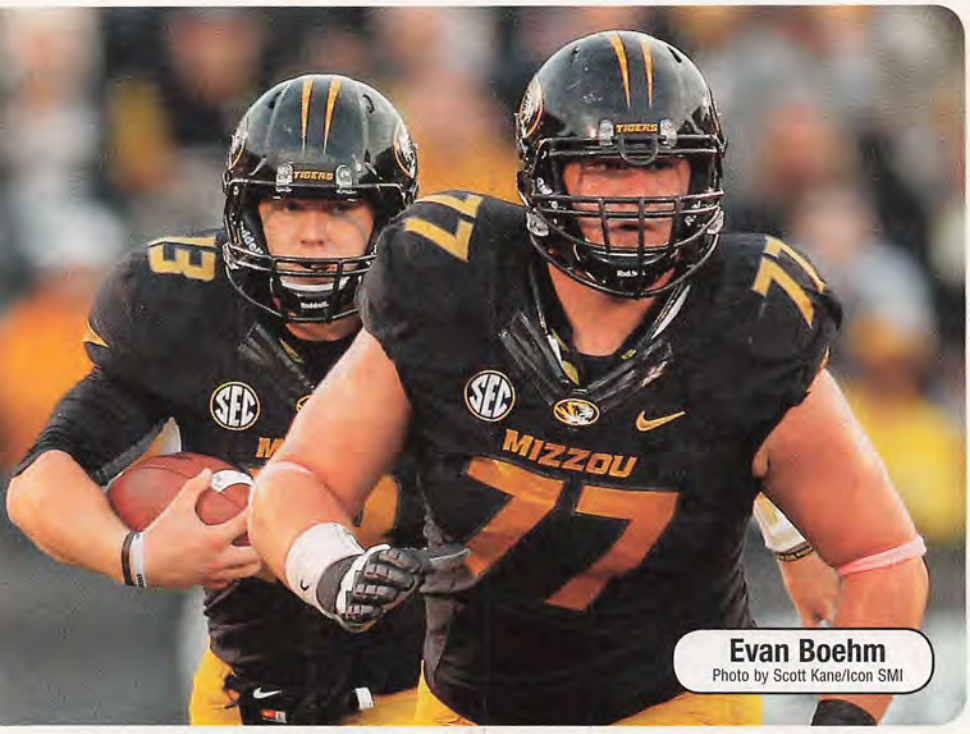
10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
5-7, 2-6

W	S.E. LOUISIANA	62-10
L	GEORGIA	20-41
W	ARIZONA STATE	24-20
L	at South Carolina	10-31
W	at UCF	21-16
L	VANDERBILT	15-19
L	ALABAMA	10-42
W	KENTUCKY	33-10
L	at Florida	7-14
W	at Tennessee (4OT)	51-48
L	SYRACUSE	27-31
L	at Texas A&M	29-59

PLAYER PROFILE



Evan Boehm
Photo by Scott Kane/Icon SMI

'Wrecking Ball' Ready To Steady The O-Line

Nobody was more disgusted with Missouri's second spring scrimmage than Evan Boehm.

He arrived last year as one of the country's most heralded offensive line recruits, started every game at left guard — the team's only offensive lineman to start every game — and emerged as a team leader and spokesman for the program.

But what had been a seamless spring transition to center hit a snag when he launched two snaps over the quarterback's head during a two-minute drill, rekindling visions of last year's horror show when MU centers regularly sent quarterbacks scrambling for fluttered shotgun snaps.

But in Boehm the Tigers trust.

"I'm not worried about Evan," offensive coordinator and offense line coach Josh Henson said. "We're going to get it."

Sure enough, a week later in the Black and Gold Game, Boehm's snaps were perfect, and the Tigers once again appeared set at center for years to come.

"I feel like I'm going to be a whole new player than I was last year," Boehm said. "That's where my focus is right now. I'm going to go out there and be a wrecking ball."

Since the late 1990s, the Tigers were consistently stable at the center position. Only four players started there from 1997-2010, but the continuity has since disappeared. From the end of 2011 through the first three weeks of 2012, four players started at center over a span of five games.

Mitch Morse and Brad McNulty took turns playing in the middle last season, and neither established himself as a full-time solution. Knee injuries to tackles Elvis Fisher and Justin Britt and guard Jack Meiners added to a miserable season along the front five.

Boehm's emergence could get the Tigers back to building hope around the man in the middle.

"Down the road at the next level, that's probably where Evan's going to be," Henson said of the 6-3, 315-pound sophomore. "You just look at body style, body type, arm length. ... He's done a good job of snapping. We still have to improve some, but the ability to improve is there. More than anything, I just believe in the kid's get-it-done attitude."

After moving to center at the start of spring practices, Boehm began to master the shotgun snap that begins almost every play in Missouri's spread attack. Other than two misfires in the second scrimmage, he threw strikes most of the spring.

"He brings a great command presence," Henson said. "It'd be nice to have him at that position for the next few years."

against Alabama.

Walk-on kicker Andrew Baggett was the surprise winner of last year's preseason competition and didn't disappoint during the season, making 14 of 20 field goal attempts, including the game-winner in the fourth overtime at Tennessee. Baggett earned a scholarship in the offseason but must hold off contender Nick Coffman in preseason camp.

The Tigers will break in a new punter. Christian Brinser, a walk-on junior, is the heavy favorite to win the job after a strong spring.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The schedule is more forgiving in 2013. Two-time defending national champion Alabama is off the slate, replaced by a November trip to up-and-coming Mississippi.

In SEC play, the Tigers' three biggest challenges are at home — against Florida, South Carolina and Texas A&M in the season finale — though MU also makes its first-ever trips to Vanderbilt and Georgia. The Tigers host Tennessee, the only SEC team they beat on the road last year, and travel to Kentucky, the only league team they beat at home.

The non-conference schedule includes two bowl teams from 2012 in Toledo and Arkansas State, but the September road is paved for a 4-0 start. MU opens with FCS Murray State and plays at Big Ten weakling Indiana.

— Dave Matter

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	MURRAY STATE	5-6
Sept. 7	TOLEDO	9-4
Sept. 21	at Indiana	4-8
Sept. 28	ARKANSAS STATE	10-3
Oct. 5	at Vanderbilt	9-4
Oct. 12	at Georgia	12-2
Oct. 19	FLORIDA	11-2
Oct. 26	SOUTH CAROLINA	11-2
Nov. 2	TENNESSEE	5-7
Nov. 9	at Kentucky	2-10
Nov. 23	at Ole Miss	7-6
Nov. 30	TEXAS A&M	11-2

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SOUTH CAROLINA GAMECOCKS

For more coverage of the Gamecocks, visit southcarolina.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Spurrier Jr./Shawn Elliott **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:** Lorenzo Ward **STADIUM:** Williams-Brice Stadium: 80,250

AT A GLANCE

2012:
11-2, 6-2 SEC (2nd, East)

COACH:
Steve Spurrier — At South Carolina: 66-37, 8 years; overall: 208-77-2, 23 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
12; 6 offense, 5 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Connor Shaw, RB Mike Davis, WR Bruce Ellington, DE Jadeveon Clowney, DE Chaz Sutton, DT Kelcy Quarles, CB Victor Hampton

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Steve Spurrier has found a coaching staff and system that's worked the last three seasons after several years of mediocrity. He has two quality quarterbacks in Dylan Thompson and Shaw to bring different dimensions to the offense. Clowney is one of college football's biggest stars on a talented defensive line.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
There isn't a single linebacker with significant playing experience returning; size could be an issue with that group as well. The offensive line, despite numbers and size, hasn't been able to be better than average lately. Now, it must replace center T.J. Johnson, who started more games than any player in school history.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Marcus Lattimore, WR Ace Sanders, C T.J. Johnson, LB Shaq Wilson, FS D.J. Swearinger

OVERVIEW:
South Carolina returns enough talent on both sides of the ball to once again contend for the SEC championship. The schedule is more manageable than last year, and Clowney is primed for a huge season. If the running game without Lattimore can be productive, the two-QB system comes together and the linebackers grow up fast, the Gamecocks will be looking for another Top-10 finish nationally, at least.

Spurrier Eyes SEC Title Behind Clowney, 2-QB System

Words don't matter to South Carolina head coach Steve Spurrier; he's been around too long for that.

Heading into 2013, it's all about action.

The Gamecocks are coming off back-to-back 11-win seasons, and Spurrier has established an upper-tier team nationally, one that is looking to take the next (big) step in winning an SEC championship.

"We're not going to sit around here and talk about what we might do or can do," Spurrier said.

"If you remember, there were some teams last year picked No. 1 in the country and all summer they talked about how good they were and all the media wanted to go interview them all summer. And they fell flat on their face. That happens when you get too much attention."

The Gamecocks will still garner a good bit of that this year. Junior defensive end Jadeveon Clowney is one of the top college players in the nation.

Spurrier has two talented and experienced quarterbacks at his disposal in senior Connor Shaw and junior Dylan Thompson.

"(Thompson) and Connor give us our two best since I've been here," Spurrier said. "That's for sure."

And with 12 returning starters off a team that finished second in the SEC East, the Gamecocks are worthy of at least a preseason Top-15 ranking in their eyes.

"I think we can be as good as we want to be," Clowney said. "We've got a group of guys that are out here trying to work hard. I think our goals should be higher than what we did in the 11-2 season."

It's not as if there aren't plenty of questions to answer, though. Gone is the winningest senior class in South Carolina history. Big-time leaders such as running back Marcus Lattimore, safety D.J. Swearinger and receiver Ace Sanders have moved on, leaving younger guys to grow up quickly if the Gamecocks are to reach double-digit wins — or more.

"We want to reach that next level," Thompson said. "You can't be satisfied because if you aim for the same place as last year, you probably won't get there, so you've got to have higher goals."

With an easier SEC schedule than last season, the Gamecocks feel they are in prime position for a huge year.

"We don't want too much attention. We want just the normal amount," Spurrier said. "I think we do have a chance to have a good team, though."

OFFENSE

With the success Dylan Thompson had at the end of last season — he threw for 300 yards and three touchdowns against rival Clemson and tossed the winning touchdown against Michigan in the Outback Bowl — the Gamecocks will find a way to get both quarterbacks on the field this year.

And South Carolina believes it can make it work.

"I think a lot of times in these two-quarterback things, when they go wrong, it has to do with the guys that are involved," Thompson said.

"I feel like a lot of times, those guys will be selfish, but I feel like with me and Connor, whatever way it goes, we'll look at it extremely positive and handle it and move on from there."

No one's quite sure how the time-share will go. Thompson was the No. 1 in spring practice because Shaw was recovering from foot surgery.

Shaw is 17-3 as a starter because of his

Jadeveon Clowney
Photo by Joe Robbins

good decision-making and running ability. He gained 435 yards rushing, while also completing 67.5 percent of his passes for 1,956 yards with 17 touchdowns and seven interceptions.

Thompson is more of a Spurrier-type passer. He threw for 1,027 yards and 10 touchdowns as Shaw's backup.

South Carolina, though, is still a run-first offense. Sophomore Mike Davis seized the starting rusher role in the spring after averaging 5.3 yards per carry last season while filling in for the injured Marcus Lattimore.

Davis will be the speedy, shifty type while Brandon Wilds, who missed all of last year with a hamstring injury, will provide the downhill running that can move the chains.

"The competition never ends," Davis said.

Junior Bruce Ellington is the team's leading returning receiver, but Damiere Byrd, Nick Jones, Kwinton Smith, Shaq Roland and Shamier Jeffery will be asked to help fill Sanders' role in an offense that's still reliant on multiple receivers to run well.

The tight ends are expected to again be a big part of the passing game. Rory Anderson has caught eight touchdown passes the last two seasons, while the 6-6 Jerell Adams had a big spring.

"We've got two of the best tight ends around," Spurrier said. "Both of them are tough. They don't shy away from the ball."

The offensive line lost its anchor at center with the graduation of T.J. Johnson, who played in more games than any Gamecock player in history, but four starters return.

A.J. Cann is an All-SEC caliber guard, while Corey Robinson and Brandon Shell were productive at the tackle spots. Cody Waldrop takes over at center.

There are plenty of bodies to help fill out the line through injuries or lack of production, but the coaching staff is still searching for more consistency.

DEFENSE

South Carolina's defense begins with unanimous All-America defensive end Jadeveon Clowney, who will have to handle plenty of hype this season.

"I'm going to be ready for it," said Clowney, who had 13 sacks and 23.5 tackles for a loss last year. "I'm just going to deal with it, just going to keep playing like I've been playing, 100 percent."

Clowney has the speed and power off the line to do so. With offenses shifting protection to his side as much as possible, it should open things for senior Chaz Sutton, who had five sacks last year opposite Clowney, and veteran defensive tackle Kelcy Quarles.

South Carolina's "rabbit" package

Connor Shaw
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Connor Shaw*	Sr.	17-3 as a starter; he'll share the position this year.	Dylan Thompson, Jr.
TB	Mike Davis	So.	Named the starter at end of the spring.	Brandon Wilds, So.
WR	Bruce Ellington*	Jr.	Two-sport star is leading returning receiver.	K.J. Brent, So.
WR	Damiere Byrd	Jr.	Team's fastest deep threat.	Shaq Roland, So.
WR	Nick Jones	Jr.	Caught seven passes last two games of 2012.	Shamier Jeffery, So.
TE	Rory Anderson	Jr.	Has eight career touchdown receptions.	Jerell Adams, So.
LT	Corey Robinson*	Jr.	A former defensive lineman.	Mike Matulis, Jr.
LG	A.J. Cann*	Jr.	New anchor of the line.	Brock Stadnik, Fr.
C	Cody Waldrop	Fr.	Struggled snapping the ball in spring.	Clayton Stadnik, Fr.
RG	Ronald Patrick*	Sr.	Started every game in 2012.	Will Sport, So.
RT	Brandon Shell*	So.	Earned Freshman All-America accolades.	Cody Gibson, Jr.
K	Landon Ard	So.	Battling for starting role.	Nick St. Germain, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Jadeveon Clowney*	Jr.	Needs nine sacks to set school's career mark.	Darius English, Fr.
DT	J.T. Surratt	Jr.	Will need to be a big run stopper.	Gerald Dixon Jr., So.
DT	Kelcy Quarles*	Jr.	Steady player who can get to the QB.	Phillip Dukes, So.
DE	Chaz Sutton	Jr.	Could have big year opposite Clowney.	Gerald Dixon, Jr.
LB	Cedrick Cooper	So.	Spent the spring recovering from knee injury.	Marcquis Roberts, So.
LB	Kaiwan Lewis	So.	Gets first shot as QB of defense.	T.J. Holloman, Fr.
SPUR	Sharrod Golightly	Jr.	In a heated battle at crucial position.	Jordan Diggs, Fr.
CB	Victor Hampton*	Jr.	Coverage specialist is primed for a big season.	Ahmad Christian, So.
CB	Jimmy Legree*	Sr.	Had three interceptions a year ago.	Ronnie Martin, Jr.
SS	Brison Williams*	Jr.	One of few veterans in secondary.	Chris Moody, Fr.
FS	Kadetrix Marcus	Jr.	Had mostly played on special teams.	T.J. Gurley, So.
P	Tyler Hull*	Jr.	Averaged 39.4 yards per boot in 2012.	Patrick Fish, Jr.

*Returning Starter

GAMECOCKS RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Larenz Bryant
Bryant is arguably the rangiest and most athletic linebacker in the country. He possesses excellent speed and is more comfortable in space than most inside linebacker prospects. He was a star at The Opening last summer in Oregon, and could challenge for early playing time.

Kelsey Griffin
Griffin opened eyes at the Under Armour All-American practices in January. Despite being a tad shorter than most defensive linemen, Griffin is explosive and has violent hands. He is very tough to block one-on-one, and has the athleticism to penetrate and chase down quarterbacks and running backs.

Na'Ty Rodgers
Steve Spurrier's system has produced some elite offensive tackles and Rodgers could be the next great one. The Gamecocks wanted an athletic left tackle prospect in the 2013 class, and Rodgers turned out to be that guy. He will need to add weight, but has the tools to be great.

THE SLEEPER

Ali Groves
A 5-10, 181-pound athlete, Groves thinks he can make a big impact on defense because of his size and agility. A two-year starter in high school and rated as the No. 74th athlete in the country by Rivals.com.

Committments	21
Average Stars	3.38
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	8
★★★☆☆	13
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	71
National Rank: 16	SEC: 8

2014 NEEDS: South Carolina will look to bring in at least one difference maker at running back in the next class. The Gamecocks will also have big needs at both tight end and wide receiver due to not signing a prospect at either position in 2013. Defensive end Jadeveon Clowney will almost assuredly enter the NFL Draft at the end of his junior year in 2013, so South Carolina will be in the market for an elite pass rusher. A couple of defensive tackles will also be a big priority for the staff.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Larenz Bryant U.S. Army All American and Rivals250 selection. Rated as the fourth best inside linebacker in the nation by Rivals.com.	LB	6-1	215	★★★★	Charlotte, NC	Vance
Mohamed Camara Rated as the No. 54 outside linebacker in the nation and as the No. 69 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.	LB	6-2	187	★★★	Cumming, GA	West Forsyth
Pharoh Cooper Selected to play in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas. Rated the ninth best overall prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com.	ATH	5-11	190	★★★★	Havelock, NC	Havelock
Devante Covington Rated as the No. 28 overall prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com and selected to play in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.	DE	6-4	220	★★★	Rockingham, NC	Richmond County
Kelsey Griffin Under Armour All-American. Rated as the No. 7 defensive tackle in the nation and as the No. 10 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.	DT	6-2	282	★★★★	Hoschton, GA	Mill Creek
Ali Groves A two-year starter in high school and rated as the No. 74 athlete in the country by Rivals.com.	ATH	5-10	181	★★★	Stone Mountain, GA	Stephenson
David Johnson Had 109 tackles, nine sacks, and 19 tackles for loss in 2012. Rated as the No. 30 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.	LB	6-1	245	★★★	Lithonia, GA	Lithonia
Bryce King Rated as the No. 3 center in the nation and as the No. 6 overall prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com.	OL	6-4	300	★★★	Dillon, SC	Dillon
Alan Knott Rated as the No. 53 offensive tackle in the nation and as the No. 61 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.	OL	6-5	275	★★★	Tyrone, GA	Sandy Creek
Ronnie Martin Originally signed with South Carolina in 2011. Was a two-year starter at Georgia Military with two interceptions in two games in 2012.	DB	5-11	175	★★★	Milledgeville, GA	Georgia Military
Connor Mitch Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 13 pro-style quarterback and as the No. 7 overall prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com.	QB	6-3	210	★★★★	Raleigh, NC	Wakefield
Skai Moore A three-year starter. Rated as the No. 19 outside linebacker in the nation and as the No. 43 overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com.	LB	6-2	210	★★★★	Fort Lauderdale, FL	University School
D.J. Park A Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 19 offensive tackle in the nation and as the No. 3 overall prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com.	OL	6-6	335	★★★★	Dillon, SC	Dillon
Na-Ty Rodgers A Rivals250 and Under Armour All-American. Rated as the 15th best offensive tackle in the nation and as the sixth best overall prospect in Maryland by Rivals.com.	OL	6-5	278	★★★★	Pomfret, MD	McDonough

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jasper Sasser Rated as the No. 59 athlete in the nation by Rivals.com. Played quarterback in high school and will likely land at defensive back at South Carolina.	ATH	6-1	189	★★★	Jacksonville, FL	Wolfson
Jamari Smith Rated as the No. 43 running back in the nation by Rivals.com. Totaled 986 yards rushing and 12 touchdowns in 2012.	RB	6-0	200	★★★	Neptune Beach, FL	Fletcher
Gerald Turner Rated as the No. 23 inside linebacker in the nation and as the No. 8 overall prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com. A three-year starter in high school.	LB	6-1	256	★★★	Goose Creek, SC	Goose Creek
J.P. Vonashek Selected to play in the Georgia Rising Seniors game. Transferred to Camden County as a senior and chose South Carolina over offers from Florida State and North Carolina.	OL	6-6	255	★★★	Kingsland, GA	Camden County
Jonathan Walton Rated as the No. 21 inside linebacker in the nation and as the No. 20 overall prospect in Alabama. A three-year starter in high school.	LB	6-1	228	★★★	Daphne, AL	Bayside Academy
Devin Washington Rated as the No. 20 weakside defensive end in the nation and as the No. 58 overall prospect in the state of Florida. Had 14 tackles for loss in 2012.	DE	6-3	225	★★★	Orlando, FL	Jones
David Williams Had over 1,904 yards rushing on 195 attempts and 23 touchdowns in 2012. Rated as the No. 21 running back in the nation and as the No. 8 overall prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com.	RB	6-1	192	★★★★	Philadelphia, PA	Imhotep Inst Charter School

GAMECOCKS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
89	Jerell Adams	TE	6-6	224	So.	Pinewood
81	Rory Anderson	TE	6-5	218	Jr.	Powder Springs, GA
19	Landon Ard	P/K	5-9	189	So.	Rock Hill
84	Tevin Bradshaw	WR	5-7	149	So.	Moncks Corner
80	K.J. Brent	WR	6-4	185	So.	Waxhaw, NC
1	Damiere Byrd	WR	5-9	168	Jr.	Sicklerville, NJ
50	A.J. Cann	OG	6-4	310	Jr.	Bamberg
7	Shon Carson	TB	5-8	219	So.	Scranton
4	Ahmad Christian	CB	5-10	189	So.	Jacksonville, FL
7	Jadeveon Clowney	DE	6-6	272	Jr.	Rock Hill
18	Cedrick Cooper	LB	6-2	215	So.	Lithonia, GA
58	Ryland Culbertson	OG	6-4	268	Jr.	Laurens
28	Mike Davis	RB	5-9	215	So.	Lithonia, GA
31	Jordan Diaz	FB	6-1	243	Jr.	Hamilton, NJ
42	Jordan Diggs	SPR	6-0	197	Fr.	Cape Coral, FL
44	Gerald Dixon	DE	6-2	275	So.	Rock Hill
92	Gerald Dixon, Jr.	DT	6-3	318	So.	Rock Hill
18	Dwayne Duckett	WR	6-0	172	Fr.	Columbia
39	Jessie Dukes	DB	5-11	171	Jr.	Blackville
40	Jevonn Dukes	S	6-1	200	So.	Blackville
52	Phillip Dukes	DT	6-3	315	So.	Manning
17	Chaz Elder	FS	6-2	194	Fr.	College Park, GA
23	Bruce Ellington	WR	5-9	197	Jr.	Moncks Corner
8	Darius English	DE	6-6	225	Fr.	Powder Springs, GA
13	Patrick Fish	P	6-0	194	Jr.	Shelby, NC
19	Kyle Fleetwood	SS	5-11	214	Fr.	Stone Mountain, GA
12	Jody Fuller	WR	5-11	211	Fr.	Charlotte, NC
78	Cody Gibson	OT	6-7	284	Jr.	Tallahassee, FL
43	Garrison Gist	FB	5-10	245	So.	Rock Hill
9	Sharrod Golightly	SPR	5-10	179	Jr.	Decatur, GA
93	Deon Green	DT	6-4	283	So.	Windermere, FL
20	T.J. Gurley	FS	5-10	183	So.	Cairo, GA
16	Austin Hails	QB	6-2	227	So.	Collinsville, IL
27	Victor Hampton	CB	5-10	197	Jr.	Darlington
59	Coleman Harley	LS	6-1	268	So.	Aiken
34	Mason Harris	DE	6-3	215	So.	Fort Oglethorpe, GA
82	Matthew Harvey	WR	6-8	225	So.	Rock Hill
83	Carlton Heard	WR	6-0	186	So.	Athens, GA
11	T.J. Holloman	LB	6-2	215	Fr.	Stone Mountain, GA
35	Jeff Homad	TE	6-2	224	Jr.	Hilton Head Island
13	Tyler Hull	P	6-2	212	Jr.	Mount Airy, NC
8	Shamier Jeffery	WR	6-1	204	So.	St. Matthews
3	Nick Jones	WR	5-7	171	Jr.	Moore
45	Jake Joyner	PK	5-11	186	Fr.	Buford, GA
48	Caleb Kelly	PK	6-0	180	Fr.	Cayce
43	James King	LB	6-0	235	So.	Goose Creek
40	Andrew Komornik	P	6-5	235	Fr.	Fort Mill
15	Jimmy Legree	CB	6-0	185	Sr.	Beaufort
22	Kaiwan Lewis	LB	6-0	221	So.	Mays Landing, NJ
25	Kadetrix Marcus	FS	6-1	185	Jr.	Stone Mountain, GA
10	Ronnie Martin	CB	5-11	173	Jr.	Spartanburg
76	Mike Matulis	OT	6-5	264	Jr.	Boynton Beach, FL
41	Connor McLaurin	FB	6-0	237	Jr.	Raleigh, NC
1	Rico McWilliams	CB	5-11	178	Fr.	Hampton, GA
47	Cameron Melia	LS	5-10	210	So.	Columbia
6	Connor Mitch	QB	6-3	219	Fr.	Raleigh, NC
6	Chris Moody	CB	6-1	210	Fr.	McDonough, GA
41	Kyle Morini	LB	5-10	220	Jr.	Lexington
5	Brendan Nosovitch	QB	6-1	223	Fr.	Allenton, PA
15	Perry Orth	QB	6-1	214	Fr.	Ponde Verda, FL
88	Drew Owens	TE	6-6	241	So.	Charlotte, NC
60	D.J. Park	OG	6-4	335	Fr.	Dillon
67	Ronald Patrick	OG	6-2	315	Sr.	Cocoa, FL
49	Devin Potter	TB	5-10	203	Fr.	Granite Falls, NC
99	Kelcy Quarles	DT	6-4	293	Jr.	Hodges
5	Kelvin Rainey	LB	6-3	228	Fr.	Yulee, FL
30	Sidney Rhodes	CB	5-10	167	Jr.	Easley
21	Marcquis Roberts	LB	6-1	215	So.	Powder Springs, GA
53	Corey Robinson	OT	6-8	338	Jr.	Havelock, NC
4	Shaq Roland	WR	6-1	182	So.	Lexington
24	Kendric Salley	TB	5-9	215	Fr.	Williston
49	Garrett Shank	S	6-0	190	Fr.	Marietta, GA
14	Connor Shaw	QB	6-1	204	Sr.	Flowery Branch, GA
71	Brandon Shell	OT	6-6	321	So.	Goose Creek
46	Darian Sims	LB	6-2	254	So.	Goose Creek
9	Kwinton Smith	WR	6-4	206	Fr.	Hamer
75	Will Sport	OG	6-5	289	So.	Milton, FL
16	Nick St. Germain	PK	5-9	180	Fr.	Powder Springs, GA
65	Brock Stadnik	OG	6-5	291	Fr.	Greensboro, NC
54	Clayton Stadnik	OC	6-3	283	Fr.	Greensboro, NC
97	J.T. Surratt	DT	6-2	311	Jr.	Winston-Salem, NC
45	Ty Sutherland	FB	5-10	240	So.	Pendleton
90	Chaz Sutton	DE	6-5	256	Sr.	Savannah, GA
17	Dylan Thompson	QB	6-3	212	Jr.	Boiling Springs
51	Cody Waldrop	OC	6-2	312	Fr.	Seffner, FL
95	Michael Washington	DE	6-3	249	So.	Allendale
85	Kane Whitehurst	WR	5-11	170	So.	Duluth, GA
22	Brandon Wilds	TB	6-2	218	So.	Blythewood
86	David Wilkins	WR	6-1	179	Sr.	Cowpens
12	Brison Williams	SS	5-11	205	Jr.	Warner Robins, GA
74	Mason Zandi	OT	6-9	287	Fr.	Irmo

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
C. Shaw	11	158.07	154	228	7	67.5	1956	17	62	177.8
D. Thompson	11	142.73	66	127	2	52.0	1027	10	94	93.4

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
A. Sanders	13	45	531	11.8	9	36	40.8
B. Ellington	13	40	600	15.0	7	43	46.2
M. Lattimore	9	26	173	6.7	0	24	19.2

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Lattimore	9	143	673	11	662	4.6	11	43	73.6
C. Shaw	11	131	608	173	435	3.3	3	64	39.5
K. Miles	13	104	395	36	359	3.5	2	17	27.6

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: S. Wilson 86, D.J. Swearinger 79, R. Bowens 59
Tackles for loss: J. Clowney 23.5, D. Taylor 8.5, two tied with 8
Sacks: J. Clowney 13, A. Fordham 5.5, C. Sutton 5
Interceptions: D. Holloman 3, J. Legree 3, three tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

Deke Adams took over for longtime defensive ends coach Brad Lawing, who took the same position at Florida, in the offseason. Adams was busy in the spring implementing a new style.

"He's very different than coach Lawing," junior defensive end **Jadeveon Clowney** said.

"Coach Adams brings something different to the table. He works on feet more than anything; fast feet. It's good to learn from two different guys, to give you that total package."

Adams also has changed the scheme. In the past, the defensive linemen were more gap-based. Now, he wants them attacking, while also remembering their assignments.

"I think being able to play and be more aggressive will help us," Adams said.

"Coach Lawing did a great job with them, but I think giving them a little bit more freedom to be aggressive and get up the field a little bit more will give us a chance to make some more plays."

• South Carolina nearly lost another assistant. Offensive line coach/running game coordinator **Shawn Elliott** flirted with joining Nick Saban's defending national championship staff at Alabama. After interviewing for the position, Elliott, a South Carolina native, decided it wasn't time to leave home.

"We've had a lot of success here over the past three years and I'm committed to being part of that continued success for many years," said Elliott, who enters his fourth year with the Gamecocks.

• In a brief interview session in January, **Steve Spurrier** played a trivia game, asking the media which four college football programs won at least 11 games the past two seasons.

Oregon, Stanford, Alabama and — of course — South Carolina were correctly guessed, and Spurrier handed out two envelopes with a $100 bill inside.

• Cornerback **Ahmad Christian** and running back **Shon Carson** didn't participate in spring practice, although both are hoping to play this season. Christian, who played in 12 games in 2012, and Carson, who has missed most of the past two seasons because of injury, made the South Carolina baseball team, which has been to three consecutive College World Series.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Jadeveon Clowney:** "They've got great defensive linemen and when you start with that, you have a chance to have a good football team. Clowney — you know what, I thought he was the best high school football player I'd ever seen. He's on track to being one of the best that's played in this league. Clowney can take over a game."

• **On the offense:** "Offensively, they were a different team without (injured RB Marcus) Lattimore. When he had a 3-yard gain, he gained 6. When he had a 6-yard gain, he gained 12. He got those extra yards every time they gave it to him. But they'll be a good team. Steve Spurrier always finds a way to generate offense and score some points. But I wouldn't put the quarterbacks among the top five or six in this league."

Chaz Sutton
Photo by Cliff Welch/Icon SMI

is a unique and successful defensive scheme. It utilizes four defensive ends at the same time in obvious passing situations, creating a speed mismatch against offensive lines.

South Carolina's ability to disrupt with its front four is the basis of the defense, and that will help make life easier on a less-experienced back seven. Four senior linebackers and linebacker/safety hybrid "Spur" DeVonte Holloman all graduated.

Kaiwan Lewis took control of the middle linebacker spot in the spring and has the respect of his teammates when he makes defensive calls.

Cedrick Cooper is supposed to start at "Will" linebacker, but he missed the entire spring because of knee surgery. Junior Sharrod Golightly won the starting spot at Spur, but he's being pushed by redshirt freshman Jordan Diggs.

"I think our biggest question mark going into the spring was linebacker, and we've still got some question marks at linebacker," defensive coordinator Lorenzo Ward said.

"I think Marcquis Roberts has had a really good spring. I think he'll have an opportunity to help us. We'll get Cedrick Cooper back. And watching (converted tight end) Kelvin Rainey run around and made some plays (this spring). I feel like we've made some progress there."

The defense's biggest loss, though, is strong safety D.J. Swearinger, who was a feared hitter and protected the middle of the field. Brison Williams is a veteran who will take that spot, but he'll have to prove early he can handle the physicality. Victor Hampton is the team's best coverage corner and is primed to have a big season.

Opposite of Hampton is Jimmy Legree, who has struggled in coverage at times since being moved over from safety last season. The rest of the secondary is made up of guys with little true playing time who will be tested early.

Getting freshman All-SEC free safety T.J. Gurley back healthy from a 2012 knee injury will help add experience.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Departed receiver Ace Sanders' biggest impact on the 2012 squad was as a punt returner. He set the school mark for yards in a season and scored two touchdowns on returns.

Victor Hampton will get the first shot to replace Sanders. Bruce Ellington could also return punts, but he

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

DE Jadeveon Clowney

Named a unanimous All-American in 2012, joining George Rogers as the only Gamecocks to ever reach that status. ... Finished last year with 13 sacks and 23.5 tackles for a loss. ... Already has sights set on being the No. 1 pick in the 2014 NFL Draft. ... Has 21 career sacks, eight shy of tying the school record. ... Had 4.5 sacks in the rivalry game against Clemson last season. ... Showed in the Outback Bowl against Michigan and in a home game against Tennessee that he can change the game from the rush end spot.

EMERGING STAR

TE Rory Anderson

A big-play threat who will be targeted regularly because Steve Spurrier likes using athletic tight ends. ... Caught 14 passes for 271 yards and five touchdowns in 2012 as sophomore. ... Has added 40 pounds since his freshman year. ... Played behind Justice Cunningham much of last year. ... Penciled in as the starter this season. ... Has a career average of 20.9 yards per catch. ... Three of his eight catches in 2011 were touchdowns. ... Goes by the nickname "Busta."

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Kwinton Smith

Redshirted in 2012. ... Among several receivers competing to replace Ace Sanders. ... Uses his 6-4 frame well against smaller defenders. ... Was a four-star prospect and a top-5 rated player in South Carolina. ... Caught 34 passes for 564 yards and 10 touchdowns in his senior season at Dillon High School in Hamer, S.C. ... Was a 14th-round selection in the 2012 MLB amateur draft by the Texas Rangers. ... Chose to play football at South Carolina over several SEC schools, including Alabama, Florida and LSU.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.9	38
Rushing	154.4	60
Passing	238.4	44
Total	392.8	47
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.1	43
Rushing	112.4	12
Passing	241.9	97
Total	354.4	46
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 0	+ 0.00	55

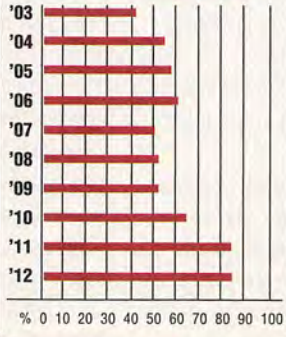
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.1	42
Rushing	192.1	25
Passing	181.5	95
Total	373.5	74
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.4	11
Rushing	136.0	45
Passing	131.7	2
Total	267.7	3
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.38	30

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.5	44
Rushing	138.5	89
Passing	238.1	57
Total	376.6	82
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.2	13
Rushing	120.7	17
Passing	194.9	21
Total	315.6	11
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.31	43

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

11-2, 6-2

W	at Vanderbilt	17-13
W	EAST CAROLINA	48-10
W	UAB	49-6
W	MISSOURI	31-10
W	at Kentucky	38-17
W	GEORGIA	35-7
L	at LSU	21-23
L	at Florida	11-44
W	TENNESSEE	38-35
W	ARKANSAS	38-20
W	WOFFORD	24-7
W	at Clemson	27-17
	Outback Bowl	
W	vs. Michigan	33-28

PLAYER PROFILE

Bruce Ellington
Photo by Joe Robbins

Versatile Wideout Ready to Step Up

Some of Bruce Ellington's teammates call him "Little Bo Jackson."

South Carolina's leading returning receiver also moonlights as the point guard on the men's basketball team.

Rest is something Ellington, a 5-9, 197-pound junior, knows little about.

Twelve days after the basketball squad ended its season in the SEC Tournament, Ellington, who averaged 10 points a game in hoops, was strapping on a helmet and working out with the football team at spring practice.

"He could play all day long," receivers coach Steve Spurrier Jr. said. "I said, 'Take a week off. Try to rest a little bit. We'll see you next Monday.' And the next day he was at practice."

Ellington says he can't stand to watch from the sidelines. He has to be right in the middle of the action.

"He can't get away. He can't sleep," Spurrier Jr. said. "He's got to run and be catching and dribbling and throwing something all the time. He has a rare quality of endurance and just competitive toughness that you don't find very often. It's pretty impressive."

So why does Ellington choose to stretch himself so thin?

"Love of the game," he said. "It's just fun to be out here playing. I'm grateful that God gave me the talent to do it."

Ellington is coming off a breakthrough season in 2012, when he made 40 catches for a team-high 600 yards. He snagged seven touchdowns, including two against rival Clemson and the game-winning score in the Outback Bowl against Michigan.

With Ace Sanders' early departure to the NFL, this season will provide an even bigger challenge for Ellington.

"I'm going to be a leader," he said. "Last year I said some things, but this year I'm going to step up and do the job. I think Coach (Steve Spurrier) wants me to be a leader, too, because I've played two years, so I'm going to step up and lead."

Ellington has proven adaptable to any situation. He changed receiver spots halfway through last season and flourished. He's the team's primary kick returner and "Wildcat" quarterback.

This year, he hopes to continue to get better at every aspect of the game, but especially at recognizing defensive coverages through film watching.

There's one problem: That'll take up even more of his precious time.

"I'm not tired at all, just out here grinding and getting it," Ellington said. "Hopefully, it pays off."

already has his hands full as a receiver and kick returner.

Ellington has been adequate the last two years on kickoff returns, but he's yet to take one back for a touchdown.

For the third consecutive season, the Gamecocks have to replace their placekicker. Landon Ard took the lead over Nick St. Germain in the spring.

Punter Tyler Hull is back, looking to better his average of 39.4 yards from a year ago.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

South Carolina has beaten Georgia in the past two seasons, yet watched the Bulldogs win the division, mostly because of scheduling.

This year, the Gamecocks miss Alabama, Texas A&M and LSU. Instead, they face Arkansas and Mississippi State from the West.

After a year of change, the crucial matchup against Georgia moves back to Week 2 in Athens. South Carolina gets Vanderbilt, Kentucky and Florida at home, but there is a difficult stretch of three consecutive road games against Arkansas, Tennessee and Missouri in October.

Out of conference, there's an intriguing home game against North Carolina to open the college football season on Aug. 29, a trip to Central Florida and the in-state rivalry contest in Columbia against Clemson. The Gamecocks have won four in a row over the Tigers.

— Brad Senkiw

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 29	NORTH CAROLINA	8-4
Sept. 7	at Georgia	12-2
Sept. 14	VANDERBILT	9-4
Sept. 28	at UCF	10-4
Oct. 5	KENTUCKY	2-10
Oct. 12	at Arkansas	4-8
Oct. 19	at Tennessee	5-7
Oct. 26	at Missouri	5-7
Nov. 2	MISSISSIPPI STATE	8-5
Nov. 16	FLORIDA	11-2
Nov. 23	COASTAL CAROLINA	8-5
Nov. 30	CLEMSON	11-2

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Bajakian | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Jancek** | **STADIUM: Neyland Stadium: 102,455**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
5-7 overall, 1-7 (SEC, 6th East)

COACH:
Butch Jones — At Tennessee: 1st year; overall: 50-27, 6 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15: 5 offense, 8 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
WR Pig Howard, RB Rajion Neal, OL Antonio "Tiny" Richardson, OL Ja'Wuan James, DL Daniel McCullers, LB A.J. Johnson, SS Brian Randolph

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Four starters return on the offensive line and each could be drafted. Running backs averaged 5.0 yards per carry, but could still stand to break more tackles. The defensive line could be much improved with six seniors. The Vols are good at linebacker with Johnson and Curt Maggitt.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The defense was the worst in school history; lack of speed is a key issue, particularly in the secondary. Switching back to a 4-3 should help. Who is going to make plays? The Vols lost their top receivers and a tight end who combined for 187 catches, 2,914 yards, 26 TDs. QB Tyler Bray left early for the NFL.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Tyler Bray, WR Justin Hunter, WR Cordarrelle Patterson, TE Mychal Rivera, OL Dallas Thomas, LB Herman Lathers

OVERVIEW:
Tennessee's offense won't be nearly as explosive after losing so many playmakers, but a horrific defense has a chance to make dramatic improvement. A new coach has energized the program. A challenging schedule that includes road trips to Oregon, Florida and Alabama will make it tough to attain a bowl bid.

New Coach Jones: Vols Must 'Learn How to Win'

The firing of Phillip Fulmer after the 2008 season continues to haunt the Tennessee football program.

The Vols are in the midst of their worst-ever five-year run, going 28-34 with consecutive seven-loss seasons and a 2-14 SEC record the past two seasons.

The Derek Dooley Experiment was a disaster, culminating with a 41-18 loss to Vanderbilt and the worst defense in the history of this storied program.

After a lengthy search, Tennessee athletic director Dave Hart handed the keys to Butch Jones. Though not a big name, at least Jones had a winning record before being hired, compared to Lane Kiffin (5-15 in the NFL) and Dooley (17-20 at Louisiana Tech). Jones was 50-27 combined at Central Michigan and Cincinnati, having won or shared four conference titles.

"We got the right guy," said Hart, who landed Jones after a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. meeting in Lexington, Ky.

Jones has a completely new staff, with the one original holdover, Jay Graham, electing to depart for Florida State in February. Five new assistants have SEC experience, important when you're trying to compete in the nation's strongest conference.

Jones has pushed many of the right buttons. He's welcomed former Vols with open arms, stirred excitement in the fan base, reached out to the media, and had landed almost double-digit commitments by mid-March, including two from Tennessee's top in-state recruits.

Jones has also pushed his team, knowing it lacks the talent to compete with the SEC's elite. He's introduced a "fast and furious" no-huddle offense, meant to be an equalizer in the defense-dominated SEC. He's made each practice rep a competition between the offense and defense, with the winning unit wearing orange jerseys at the next practice. He's emphasized fundamentals and technique.

And he wanted a better-conditioned team. He said players, collectively, lost 320 pounds while gaining 220 pounds of muscle during offseason workouts.

One key challenge is overcoming a defeatist attitude.

"We have to learn how to win," Jones said.

Another challenge is fixing a horrendous defense. New defensive coordinator John Jancek quickly identified the problem: "We're a poor-tackling defense."

Tennessee's offense was productive, but that delivered just one SEC win. And it will be without a prolific passer, two high-draft picks at receiver, and a record-setting tight end.

With all that talent, how did Tennessee go 5-7?

"It was a lack of leadership, I hate to say," offensive tackle Ja'Wuan James said.

But that failure could provide motivation.

"We are hungry," defensive lineman Marlon Walls said.

OFFENSE

After a miserable 2011 season, Tennessee's offense was fourth in the SEC in scoring and second in total offense and passing in 2012.

But those numbers will be almost impossible to duplicate.

Gone are Tyler Bray's 3,612 passing yards and 34 touchdowns. Gone are 151 catches and 2,352 receiving yards among three wideouts. Gone are 47 catches from the tight end position.

The combined starts among the wide receivers and tight ends: two. The returning wide receivers have 30 combined receptions.

Jones hopes a no-huddle, fast-paced offense will prevent defenses from substituting and wear out the opponent.

A.J. Johnson
Photo by Joe Robbins

One area of vast improvement last season was the run game. Tennessee went from averaging 90 yards and 2.8 yards per carry to 160.3 yards per game and 4.7 yards per carry. Returning tailbacks Rajion Neal (708 yards) and Marlin Lane (658) averaged 4.5 and 5.5 yards per carry, respectively. But neither broke many tackles.

Neal has more speed; Lane runs better between the tackles. Look for UT to get Neal out on the perimeter and to throw more screen passes. Neal and Lane combined for 48 catches last season.

The offensive line — with 123 combined starts and four returning starters — should be the best in the SEC. The Vols might have the best tackle duo in the country in Ja'Wuan James (37 starts) and Antonio "Tiny" Richardson, who did a commendable job pass-blocking Georgia's Jarvis Jones and South Carolina's Jadeveon Clowney.

Guard Zach Fulton is a run-block road grader. James Stone is a dependable center. The other guard spot is a battle between Alex Bullard (14 starts) and Marcus Jackson (five starts).

Unlike a year ago, when UT had three playmakers at receiver, the Vols don't have a proven big-play wideout. Pig Howard is the leading returner among wideouts with 13 catches. Vincent Dallas has nine, Jacob Carter eight. Don't be surprised if a freshman — Paul Harris, Ryan Jenkins or MarQuez North — makes an impact.

"We have playmakers," offensive coordinator Mike Bajakian said. "We just need to identify them."

The quarterback battle is between Justin Worley, who made three starts when Bray was injured, and Nathan Peterman, a redshirt freshman who was recruited to Cincinnati by Jones. A pocket passer, Worley has thrown 110 passes in two seasons and had a 291-yard passing game against Middle Tennessee. Peterman is more mobile and has a stronger arm.

Jones said he's "encouraged" by their progress.

Tennessee signed two quarterbacks — athletic Joshua Dobbs and pro-style passer Riley Ferguson.

Bajakian was asked about managing quarterbacks with different styles.

"First and foremost, they need to be able to throw the football," Bajakian said. "Their ability with the ball in their hands is secondary."

DEFENSE

The experiment with the 3-4 defense was an abject failure — resulting in the program's worst defense ever. It ranked last in the SEC in yards allowed (471.3) and points allowed (35.7). Troy terrorized Tennessee with 721 yards and 48 points. Four other teams chalked up more than 500 total yards.

"Last year we had the possibility to be a great defense," fifth-year defensive lineman Marlon Walls said. "But we were thinking too much. With this

Ja'Wuan James
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Justin Worley	Jr.	Most experienced QB with three starts, 110 career passes.	Nathan Peterman, Fr.
RB	Rajion Neal*	Sr.	Fastest back on team; gained 708 yards, 4.5 ypc.	Marlin Lane, Jr.
WR	Pig Howard	So.	Quick, can break tackles, but inconsistent hands.	Drae Bowles, Fr.
WR	Vincent Dallas	Jr.	Nine catches is second among returning wideouts.	Devrin Young, Jr.
WR	Cody Blanc	So.	Good route runner, good hands, solid spring.	MarQuez North, Fr.
TE	Brendan Downs	Jr.	Decent blocker, hopes to improve as receiver.	Justin King, So.
LT	"Tiny" Richardson*	Jr.	Outstanding pass blocker, may go to NFL early.	Alan Posey, So.
LG	Alex Bullard	Sr.	Versatile lineman, can play several positions.	Marcus Jackson, Jr.
C	James Stone*	Sr.	After shaky start, has become dependable center.	Mack Crowder, So.
RG	Zach Fulton*	Sr.	Top-notch run blocker; 28 starts is second among OL.	Marques Pair, Jr.
RT	Ja'Wuan James*	Sr.	Veteran of group with 37 starts; All-SEC talent.	Kyler Kerbyson, So.
K	Michael Palardy*	Sr.	Inconsistent but has hit 18 of 26 FGs last two years.	Derrick Brodus, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Jacques Smith*	Sr.	14 starts most among DL, needs to make plays.	Jordan Williams, Jr.
DT	Daniel McCullers*	Sr.	Mountain of man at 6-8, 365; impressive run stopper.	Daniel Hood, Sr.
DT	Mo Couch*	Sr.	Had 38 tackles, second-most among DL; solid player.	Corey Miller, Sr.
DE	Marlon Walls	Sr.	Still hasn't played to talent level, needs to emerge.	LaTroy Lewis, Fr.
LB	Curt Maggitt*	Jr.	Team's best pass rusher, missed spring with injury.	Greg King, Sr.
LB	A.J. Johnson*	Jr.	Led SEC with 138 tackles but has just one sack.	John Propst, Sr.
LB	Dontavis Sapp	Sr.	One of team's fastest LBs, had strong spring.	Raiques Crump, Sr.
CB	Riyahd Jones	Jr.	Has cover skills UT needs, adapted well from JC.	Eric Gordon, Sr.
CB	Justin Coleman*	Jr.	He competes but got beat a lot last year.	Daniel Gray, So.
SS	Byron Moore*	Sr.	Five INTs led team last year; was second in tackles.	LaDarrell McNeil, So.
FS	Brian Randolph*	So.	QB of defense; tore his ACL in third game last year.	Geraldo Orta, So.
P	Michael Palardy*	Sr.	Averaged 43.1 yards per punt; hang time an issue.	Matt Darr, Jr.

*Returning Starter

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

MarQuez North
Despite the coaching change, Tennessee was able to bring in North, who is the second-rated receiver in the country by Rivals.com. North has a lethal combination of size, strength, and speed. He can get separation without the ball, and make big plays with it.

Jason Carr
Tennessee had trouble rushing the passer and stopping the run in 2012, and Carr has the ability to do both. He is big and strong enough to draw double teams in the run game, but he also has the athleticism to come off the edge or push the pocket.

Jalen Reeves-Maybin
Reeves-Maybin has the potential to be the next great safety in Knoxville. He is an excellent athlete with the ball skills to create turnovers and the frame to add weight and intimidate receivers. Once he gets stronger, he can roll down and be a force in run support as well.

THE SLEEPER

Malik Foreman
An impact player on offense, defense and special teams, Foreman said the Volunteer staff was impressed by his 4.4 speed in the 40 and his explosiveness in the open field as an offensive player.

Committments	21
Average Stars	3.19
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	5
★★★☆☆	15
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	67
National Rank: 21	SEC: 10

2014 NEEDS: The biggest need for the Volunteers in 2014 will be running back, where as many as three prospects could be brought in. After only signing one in 2013, Tennessee will also look to bring in a couple of offensive tackles. One position where the Volunteers didn't sign a single prospect in last year's class is at defensive tackle, and that will be a big position of need in 2014. Tennessee will also look to upgrade the talent at linebacker by bringing a few talented prospects there.

— by Jake Rowe/UGASports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
A.J. Branisel	TE	6-4	225	★★★	South Euclid, OH	Notre Dame Cathedral Latin
Rated as the No. 29 tight end in the nation and the No. 46 overall prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com. A three-year starter in high school.						
Malik Brown	DE	6-3	250	★★★	West Palm Beach, FL	Dwyer
Chose Tennessee over offers from Minnesota, South Florida and Syracuse. Had 11 sacks and 14 tackles for loss in 2012.						
Jason Carr	DE	6-6	280	★★★★	Memphis, TN	White Station
A Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 13 strongside defensive end in the nation and as the No. 6 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Joshua Dobbs	QB	6-3	190	★★★	Alpharetta, GA	Alpharetta
Selected to the Georgia Rising Seniors game in 2011 where he was the leading passer. Rated as the No. 20 pro-style quarterback in the nation by Rivals.com.						
Riley Ferguson	QB	6-2	190	★★★	Matthews, NC	Butler
Threw for 3,345 yards and 48 touchdowns in 2011 and for 2,624 and 21 touchdowns in 2012. Led team to 16-0 record and a state championship in 2012.						
Malik Foreman	ATH	5-10	170	★★★	Kingsport, TN	Dobyns Bennett
Rated as the No. 17 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com. Played both ways in high school, but will play cornerback at Tennessee.						
Paul Harris	WR	6-4	186	★★★★	Upper Marlboro, MD	Frederick Douglass
Rated as the No. 40 wide receiver in the nation and as the No. 7 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com. Had 17 touchdown receptions in 2012.						
Ryan Jenkins	WR	5-10	179	★★★	Marietta, GA	Lassiter
Flipped from Clemson to Tennessee. Rated as the No. 55 wide receiver in the nation and as the No. 37 overall prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Lemond Johnson	ATH	6-1	190	★★★	Cooper City, FL	Cooper City
Will play safety at Tennessee. Rated as the No. 48 athlete in the nation and as the No. 98 overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com.						
Riyahd Jones	DB	6-0	185	★★★	Garden City, KS	Garden City C.C.
Originally from Columbus, Ga. Rated as the No. 55 overall JUCO prospect in the nation by Rivals.com. Chose Tennessee over Kansas State and Mississippi State.						
Brett Kendrick	OL	6-5	295	★★★	Knoxville, TN	Christian Academy Of Knoxville
Rated as the No. 21 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com. Chose Tennessee over an offer from Arkansas late in the process.						
Jabo Lee	RB	5-10	180	★★★	Dillon, SC	Dillon
Missed most of 2012 season due to a knee injury. Rushed for 1,642 yards and 26 touchdowns in 2011. Rated as No. 46 running back in the nation by Rivals.com.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jaylen Miller	DE	6-3	265	★★★	Gaffney, SC	Gaffney
Registered 62 tackles, 24.5 sacks, three forced fumbles and a fumble recovery in 2012. Rated as the No. 12 overall prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com.						
MarQuez North	WR	6-4	205	★★★★	Charlotte, NC	Mallard Creek
U.S. Army All-American and Rivals100 selection. Rated as the No. 2 wide receiver in the nation and as the top player in North Carolina by Rivals.com.						
Woody Quinn	TE	6-6	260	★★	Santa Ana, CA	Santa Ana C.C.
Totaled 15 catches for 252 yards and a touchdown in eight games in 2012. Chose Tennessee over offers from Fresno State and San Diego State.						
Jalen Reeves-Maybin	ATH	6-1	198	★★★★	Clarksville, TN	Northeast
Will play safety at Tennessee. A Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 11 athlete in the nation and as the No. 7 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Austin Sanders	OL	6-5	300	★★★★	Cleveland, TN	Bradley Central
Rivals250 selection. Rated as the No. 20 offensive tackle in the nation and as the No. 8 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Josh Smith	WR	6-1	185	★★★	Knoxville, TN	Christian Academy Of Knoxville
Registered 65 catches for 1,1176 yards and 15 touchdowns in 15 games in 2012. Rated as the No. 24 overall prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com.						
Cameron Sutton	DB	6-0	175	★★★	Jonesboro, GA	Jonesboro
Chose Tennessee over offers from Auburn, Georgia Tech and Ole Miss. A two-sport athlete who played football and basketball.						
Corey Vereen	LB	6-2	220	★★★	Winter Garden, FL	West Orange
A three-year starter. Rated as the No. 27 outside linebacker in the nation and as the No. 64 overall prospect in Florida by Rivals.com.						
Dylan Wiesman	OL	6-4	280	★★★	Cincinnati, OH	Colerain
Rated as the No. 36 offensive guard in the nation and as the No. 47 overall prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com.						

VOLUNTEERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
30	Max Arnold	DB	5-11	186	So.	McKenzie
13	Patrick Ashford	QB	6-0	201	So.	Morristown
36	Ryan Ault	P/PK	5-11	190	Fr.	Brentwood
88	Joseph Ayres	TE	6-3	273	Sr.	Knoxville
83	Cody Blanc	WR	6-3	202	So.	Knoxville
45	Austin Bolen	RB	5-11	211	Jr.	Knoxville
7	Drae Bowles	WR	6-0	202	Fr.	Jackson
17	Brent Brewer	LB	6-1	214	Sr.	Tyrone, GA
42	Derrick Brodus	PK/P	5-11	188	Jr.	Maryville
78	Alex Bullard	OL	6-2	300	Sr.	Franklin
5	George Bullock	PK	6-0	198	Fr.	Knoxville
51	Kenny Bynum	LB	6-1	246	Fr.	Jacksonville, FL
39	Michael Cantwell	LB	5-11	208	So.	Morristown
53	J.R. Carr	LS	5-10	224	Sr.	Lomita, CA
69	Allan Carson	DL	6-1	323	So.	Oxford, AL
87	Jacob Carter	WR	6-0	180	Jr.	Nashville
93	Gregory Clark	DL	6-2	323	Jr.	Warner Robins, GA
27	Justin Coleman	DB	5-10	182	Jr.	Brunswick, GA
89	Brock Collier	TE	6-2	268	Jr.	Joelton
19	Tyler Coombes	DB	6-0	195	Jr.	Lebanon
44	Maurice Couch	DL	6-2	299	Sr.	Orlando, FL
9	Sam Cranford	WR	6-4	189	Fr.	Nashville
18	Jason Croom	WR	6-5	232	Fr.	Norcross, GA
57	Mack Crowder	OL	6-2	283	So.	Bristol
40	Raiques Crump	LB	6-1	218	Sr.	Adamsville, AL
6	Vincent Dallas	WR	5-11	187	Jr.	Ellenwood, GA
43	Matt Darr	P	6-1	213	Jr.	Bakersfield, CA
85	Brendan Downs	TE	6-5	254	Jr.	Bristol
3	Tyler Drummer	WR	6-1	172	Sr.	Powell
40	Alex Ellis	TE	6-4	222	So.	Del Mar, DE
15	Tyrin Fairman	DB	5-8	180	So.	Monmouth Junction, NJ
42	Charles Folger	TE	6-4	225	Fr.	Augusta, GA
46	Channing Fugate	LB	6-1	239	Sr.	Jackson, KY
72	Zach Fulton	OL	6-5	324	Sr.	Homewood, IL
59	Matt Giampapa	LS	6-0	239	So.	Jackson
65	Jacob Gilliam	OL	6-4	287	Jr.	Knoxville
24	Eric Gordon	DB	5-9	190	Sr.	Nashville
9	Daniel Gray	DB	5-11	175	So.	Lauderdale Lakes, FL
59	Gregory Grieco	LB	5-10	220	Jr.	Knoxville
52	Christian Harris	LB	6-1	226	So.	Woodstock, GA
1	Paul Harris	WR	6-4	195	Fr.	Accokeek, MD
57	Andrew Henry	LS	6-2	212	So.	Gallatin
30	Alden Hill	RB	6-2	217	Fr.	Alliance, OH
97	Daniel Hood	DL	6-4	292	Sr.	Knoxville
2	Pig Howard	WR	5-8	185	So.	Orlando, FL
68	Marcus Jackson	OL	6-2	310	Jr.	Vero Beach, FL
70	Ja'Wuan James	OL	6-6	323	Sr.	Suwanee, GA
45	A.J. Johnson	LB	6-2	240	Jr.	Gainesville, GA
28	Lemond Johnson	DB	6-1	190	Fr.	Cooper City, FL
21	Riyahd Jones	DB	6-0	186	Jr.	Columbus, GA
22	Reggie Juin	RB	5-7	171	Sr.	Conyers, GA
77	Kyler Kerbyson	OL	6-4	320	So.	Knoxville
48	Greg King	LB	6-2	239	Sr.	Memphis
38	Justin King	TE	6-2	225	So.	Dunwoody, GA
15	Marlin Lane	RB	5-11	205	Jr.	Daytona Beach, FL
4	LaTroy Lewis	DL	6-4	238	Fr.	Akron, OH
4	Spencer Mackle	WR	6-2	200	Jr.	Knoxville
56	Curt Maggitt	LB	6-3	240	Jr.	West Palm Beach, FL
98	Daniel McCullers	DL	6-8	355	Sr.	Raleigh, NC
33	LaDarrell McNeil	DB	6-1	195	So.	Dallas, TX
82	Justin Meredith	TE	6-5	223	Fr.	Anderson, SC
80	Corey Miller	DL	6-3	257	Sr.	Wellford, SC
3	Byron Moore	DB	6-0	193	Sr.	Carson, CA
20	Rajion Neal	RB	5-11	211	Sr.	Fayetteville, GA
95	Danny O'Brien	DL	6-2	304	Fr.	Flint, MI
13	Naz Oliver	DB	5-10	179	Sr.	Jersey City, NJ
26	Geraldo Orta	DB	6-0	179	So.	Valdosta, GA
6	Tyler Page	QB	6-3	203	Jr.	Candler, NC
66	Marques Pair	OL	6-5	321	Jr.	Sumter, SC
1	Michael Palardy	PK/P	5-11	177	Sr.	Coral Springs, FL
10	Brett Parisi	WR	6-2	190	So.	Knoxville
12	Nathan Peterman	QB	6-2	226	Fr.	Fruit Cove, FL
67	Alan Posey	OL	6-5	321	So.	Smithonia, GA
21	David Priddy	DB	5-10	180	Fr.	Hendersonville
47	John Propst	LB	6-0	225	Sr.	Hoover, AL
37	Brian Randolph	DB	6-0	195	So.	Marietta, GA
34	Jalen Reeves-Maybin	ATH	6-1	200	Fr.	Clarksville
74	Antonio Richardson	OL	6-6	332	Jr.	Nashville
29	Jonmichael Samsel	WR	5-11	190	Fr.	Morristown
41	Dontavis Sapp	LB	6-2	224	Sr.	Valdosta, GA
96	Trevarris Saulsberry	DL	6-4	285	So.	Gainesville, FL
76	John Simcox	OL	6-2	270	Fr.	Kingsport
55	Jacques Smith	DL	6-2	244	Sr.	Ooltewah
29	Tom Smith	RB	5-11	213	So.	Apopka, FL
17	Joe Stocstill	QB	6-2	220	Fr.	Lewisburg
64	James Stone	OL	6-3	300	Sr.	Nashville
24	Deanthonie Summerhill	RB	5-9	201	Jr.	Tuscumbia, AL
43	Dakota Summers	TE	6-3	235	Jr.	Camden
53	Justin Thomas	LB	6-0	225	Fr.	Richmond, VA
31	Tino Thomas	DB	6-0	199	Fr.	Memphis
38	Nikolay Timoshchuk	LB	6-1	235	Fr.	Chattanooga
35	Jaron Toney	DB	5-10	188	Jr.	Alcoa
34	Patrick Toole	PK	5-10	170	So.	Walkill, NY
50	Corey Vereen	LB	6-2	230	Fr.	Winter Garden, FL
58	Marlon Walls	DL	6-2	285	Sr.	Olive Branch, MS
48	Ryeon Wedley	RB	5-9	220	Fr.	Humboldt
80	Dylan West	WR	6-1	186	Jr.	Oneida
54	Jordan Williams	DL	6-5	256	Jr.	Gainesville, FL
7	Michael F. Williams	DB	5-11	165	Fr.	Laurel, MD
2	Michael L. Williams	DB	5-9	176	So.	Knoxville
5	Winston Williams	WR	5-8	180	Fr.	Brentwood
14	Justin Worley	QB	6-4	213	Jr.	Rock Hill, SC
27	Jay Yoakum	DB	6-0	190	Fr.	Maryville
19	Devrin Young	WR	5-8	172	Jr.	Knoxville

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
Tyler Bray	12	146.3	268	451	12	59.4	3612	34	72	301.0
Justin Worley	5	96.8	15	23	2	65.2	134	0	19	26.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Justin Hunter	12	73	1083	14.8	9	46	90.2
C. Patterson	12	46	778	16.9	5	58	64.8
Mychal Rivera	12	36	562	15.6	5	62	46.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Rajion Neal	10	156	741	33	708	4.5	5	29	70.8
Marlin Lane	12	120	679	21	658	5.5	2	45	54.8
C. Patterson	12	25	323	15	308	12.3	3	67	25.7

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: A.J. Johnson 138, B. Moore 86, H. Lathers 66
Tackles for loss: A.J. Johnson 8.5, J. Smith 7, D. McCullers 5.5
Sacks: D. Sentimore 4, four tied with 2
Interceptions: B. Moore 5, P. Waggner 2, E. Gordon 2

NOTEBOOK

UT made several position changes, moving diminutive running back **Devrin Young** to receiver, strong safety **Brent Brewer** to linebacker, outside linebacker **LaTroy Lewis** to defensive end, linebacker **Corey Vereen** to end, outside linebacker **Jacques Smith** to end and fullback **Justin King** to tight end.

• Free safety **Brian Randolph**, who suffered a torn ACL against Florida on Sept. 15, was full-go at spring practice. Offensive tackle **Antonio "Tiny" Richardson** (shoulder surgery) was limited. Outside linebacker **Curt Maggitt** (ACL), defensive tackle **Mo Couch** (shoulder) and freshman defensive back **Jalen Reeves-Maybin** (shoulder) did not participate in spring drills.

• Five defensive linemen participated in a walk-athon during spring break to raise money for 14-year-old cancer victim **Katelyn Norman**, whose courageous battle drew national attention and a phone call from Donald Trump.

• Kicker **Michael Palardy** said coach **Butch Jones** stuck his finger in Palardy's helmet ear hole trying to distract him during a spring kicking drill.

• Safety **Byron Moore** called the team's defense the "Orange Swarm" because it's going to fly to the football. He said the unit has gained confidence with each practice. Defensive tackle **Daniel Hood** said there were more hard hits in the second scrimmage than there were all of last spring. And Hood said the defense has been simplified, allowing the Vols to play faster.

• Players hand-delivered invitations for a Saturday scrimmage to UT faculty members. More than 100 attended. The faculty was treated to a pre-scrimmage presentation from Jones, served breakfast and given a tour of the facilities.

• Quarterbacks had difficulty with accuracy much of the spring. Part of the reason might have been throwing to a young group of receivers who don't exactly resemble high draft picks Cordarrelle Patterson and Justin Hunter.

• Jones likes to provide commentary with a microphone during practices. He called out players for penalties, dropped passes, fumbles and for being tired. At one point, he chided freshman defensive lineman **Corey Vereen**, who shoved a player in the back. "Fifty is out of the game. Take his helmet off. Take his pads off. We're not doing that around here."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On the Vols' defense:** "They'll be better defensively for the simple reason they can't be any worse. They paid a bunch of money to get what they got (Sal Sunseri was paid $800,000 a year and given a three-year contract). They might have had enough talent to have one of best defenses in the league last year. I didn't think there was any way they could be as bad as they were last year. Hiring Sal Sunseri was the biggest mistake Derek Dooley made."

• **On this season:** "They're going to have a tough year. They lost too many weapons on offense. Personnel-wise, they are below average on defense. Kentucky got 412 yards on them, and Kentucky's offense sucked. The running backs are average SEC guys. Their running backs don't look that fast."

Justin Worley
Photo by Don McPeak-USA TODAY Sports

coaching staff and their philosophy, I've got no doubt in my mind we can be a great defense."

Defensive line coach Steve Stripling has been demanding.

"Coach Strip will get in your face and call you out," said Walls, who's had five defensive line coaches. "He said all he's heard for 30 years was how great Tennessee's defense was and we're not holding up to it."

To a man, Tennessee's defenders say they're playing with a chip on their shoulders. Senior defensive end Jacques Smith said last year's scheme masked the team's talent.

"I think the defensive line can be the best group on the team," said Smith, UT's most consistent lineman in the spring.

Smith is one of six senior linemen with starting experience. The combined starts among the D-linemen: 56. Daniel Hood, Daniel McCullers, Mo Couch, Corey Miller, Walls and Smith are vying for starting jobs.

Tennessee has only two proven linebackers, evidence that UT has done a poor job of recruiting the position in recent years. Junior A.J. Johnson led the SEC with 138 tackles last season, but he has just one career sack and needs to make more impactful plays. Junior outside linebacker Curt Maggitt, who missed the spring with a torn ACL, might be the team's best pass rusher.

Last season UT was 96th in the nation in sacks with just 17 — seven by returning linemen and three by returning linebackers.

Linebackers coach Tommy Thigpen said UT will focus on the three Ts: tackling, turnovers and third downs.

UT's secondary allowed 282.5 passing yards per game, 26 touchdowns, a 61 percent completion rate and recorded just 12 interceptions. Lack of speed was evident, but so was lack of understanding the scheme.

On paper, UT appears to have decent defensive backs. Free safety Brian Randolph was the quarterback of the group until suffering a torn ACL in the third game. Byron Moore, a USC transfer, led the team with five interceptions. Strong safety LaDarrell McNeil was the most consistent spring performer. And cornerback Justin Coleman has been a 13-game starter.

Walk-on Jaron Toney and fleet-footed Daniel Gray are in the rotation.

"Last season left a bitter taste in our mouth," Hood said. "With this coaching staff, we will achieve a lot more."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Michael Palardy has made 18 of 26 field-goal attempts over the past two seasons, but his low trajectory has been troublesome. Palardy said shorter

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

LB A.J. JOHNSON

Johnson, a junior, made second-team All-SEC last season after leading the league with 138 tackles (fourth-most in the NCAA). ... He had 80 stops as a freshman, but he has only one career sack and no interceptions. ... A versatile athlete, Johnson scored a team-high six touchdowns out of the Wildcat package last season. ... He made 21 tackles against Mississippi State last season. ... Has played well against Alabama, with 27 stops in two games.

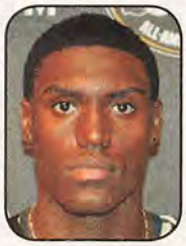
EMERGING STAR

SS LaDarrell McNeil

The sophomore, one of the fastest players on the team, started the final seven games of last season as a true freshman. ... He ranked fifth on the team with 58 tackles, with 55 of those stops coming in the last nine games. ... Had two 10-tackle games. ... Was the team's most consistent defensive back in the spring. ... Was a Rivals.com four-star recruit and a *Parade* All-American out of Wilmer-Hutchins High in Dallas.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR MarQuez North



This four-star prospect was tabbed the No. 1 recruit in North Carolina by Rivals.com in the 2013 class. Rivals.com ranked him as the No. 2 wide receiver in the country. ... Averaged more than 25 yards per catch as a junior and more than 15 yards per rush as a senior. ... Won USA Junior Olympics in 110-meter hurdles at age 12. ... The 6-4 wideout steps into a situation in which Tennessee is looking for playmakers at the position.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	27.0	58
Rushing	109.2	105
Passing	254.5	30
Total	363.8	75
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	25.1	56
Rushing	152.5	60
Passing	229.6	81
Total	382.2	69
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.31	36

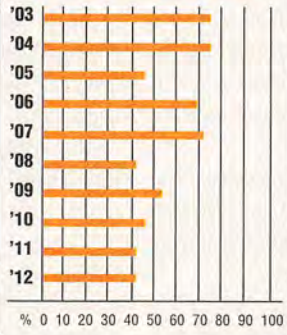
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.3	106
Rushing	90.1	116
Passing	242.6	50
Total	332.7	104
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.6	36
Rushing	162.7	69
Passing	177.8	12
Total	340.5	28
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
0	+0.0	T-59

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	36.2	22
Rushing	160.3	61
Passing	315.6	15
Total	475.9	18
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	35.7	104
Rushing	188.8	85
Pass	282.5	111
Total	471.3	107
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 5	- 0.42	88

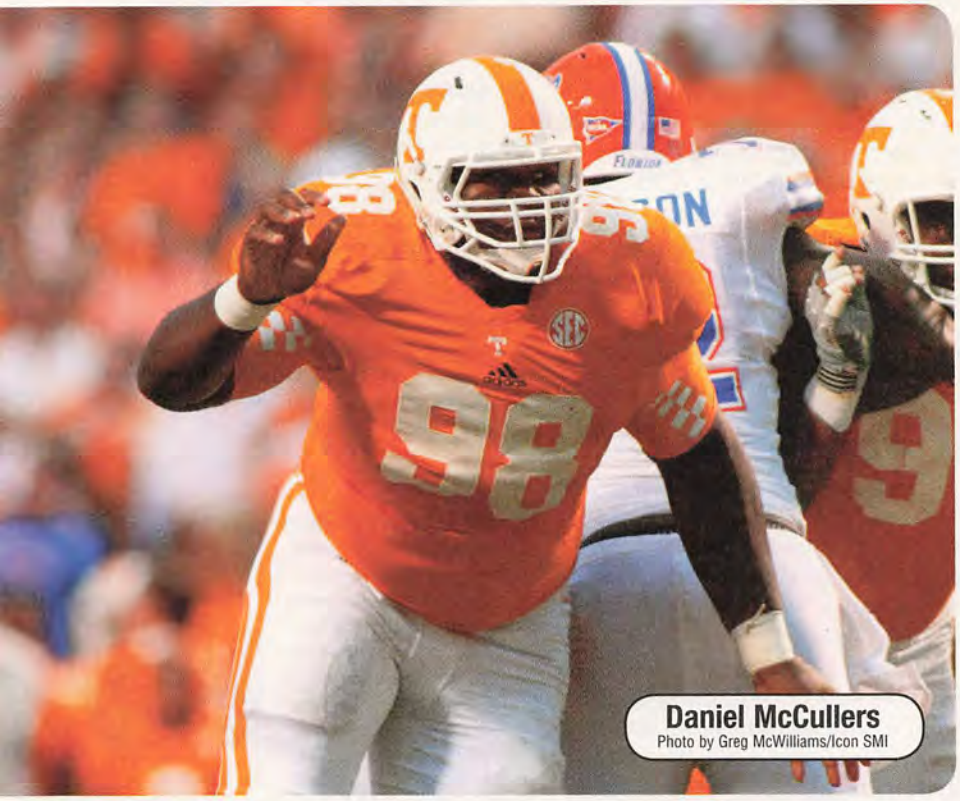
10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
5-7, 1-7

W	vs. NC State (Atlanta, GA)	35-21
W	GEORGIA STATE	51-13
L	FLORIDA	20-37
W	AKRON	47-26
L	at Georgia	44-51
L	at Mississippi State	31-41
L	ALABAMA	13-44
L	at South Carolina	35-38
W	TROY	55-48
L	MISSOURI (4OT)	48-51
L	at Vanderbilt	18-41
W	KENTUCKY	37-17

PLAYER PROFILE



Daniel McCullers
Photo by Greg McWilliams/Icon SMI

'Big Grizz' Loses Pounds, Not Desire

Tennessee defensive tackle Daniel McCullers chased down a running back on a screen pass during a spring practice.

What makes this newsworthy is McCullers is 6-8, 360 pounds and hadn't made that kind of play since he signed with Tennessee before the 2012 season.

McCullers was able to make the play for two reasons: He's lost weight and gained desire.

Could he have made that play in the past?

"I could have," he said.

Could have? The lack of want-to was contagious last year, as Tennessee had the worst defense in school history. But the desire to improve this year also appears to be contagious, and it starts with the man coach Butch Jones calls the "Big Grizz."

"He's going to be critical," Jones said. "The big thing is football endurance. Can he stay in the game and endure seven-, eight-, nine-play drives and have mental toughness?"

McCullers, who dropped from 380 to his high school freshman weight of 355, said he's quicker and more durable.

"Last year, in the fourth quarter, I burned out a little," McCullers said. "This year, I'm ready to go."

In the past, McCullers has been content to anchor the line of scrimmage and not allow the opponent to run in his gap.

Tennessee coaches want more.

"He's a huge body," defensive coordinator John Jancek said.

"You can't move him. But he can be disruptive. We want him to come off the ball, knock his guy back and make a tackle for a loss. We want him to make plays in the offenses' backfield, not just on the line of scrimmage, mauling people."

Defensive line coach Steve Stripling sees a young man who can take hard coaching but is still a work in progress.

"We're working on leverage, getting his pads down," Stripling said. "His whole life he's gotten away with playing higher because he was bigger and stronger."

McCullers is confident he will improve under Stripling and that the defensive line will improve on its 12 sacks.

"Coach Strip has put a lot of guys in the league," McCullers said. "We're going to listen to him and I think we'll have one of the best D-lines in the country."

steps and a stronger leg have allowed him to get more lift.

Palardy also hopes to keep the punting job. He averaged 43.1 yards on 36 punts last season. Matt Darr averaged 39.0 yards on 16 punts.

The Vols will miss the dynamic Cordarrelle Patterson, who averaged 25.2 yards on punt returns, 28.0 yards on kick returns and scored a touchdown on each. Devrin Young has averaged 11.8 and 9.7 yards on punt returns in the past two seasons. He averaged a modest 17.8 yards on kick returns.

The coverage units were solid.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The Vols hope to avoid dubious history — going three straight seasons without a bowl for the first time since 1975-78. Postseason play will be a challenge since UT plays five teams — at Oregon, at Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, at Alabama — that won at least 11 games each and two other teams that went to a bowl game.

Tennessee opens against Austin Peay and Western Kentucky, coached by Bobby Petrino, and plays South Alabama in game five. The Vols face Oregon, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama in a brutal six-game stretch.

To make a bowl, the Vols will have to finish strong against Missouri, Auburn, Vanderbilt (which won nine games for the first time since 1915) and Kentucky. Missouri, Auburn and Kentucky were a combined 2-22 in SEC play last year.

— Jimmy Hyams

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	AUSTIN PEAY	2-9
Sept. 7	WESTERN KENTUCKY	7-6
Sept. 14	at Oregon	12-1
Sept. 21	at Florida	11-2
Sept. 28	SOUTH ALABAMA	2-11
Oct. 5	GEORGIA	12-2
Oct. 19	SOUTH CAROLINA	11-2
Oct. 26	at Alabama	13-1
Nov. 2	at Missouri	5-7
Nov. 9	AUBURN	3-9
Nov. 23	VANDERBILT	9-4
Nov. 30	at Kentucky	2-10

2012 SEC LEADERS

PASS EFFICIENCY	G	CMP	ATT	INT	PCT.	YDS	TD	EFFIC.
1. AJ McCarron, Alabama	14	211	314	3	67.2	2933	30	175.3
2. Aaron Murray, Georgia	14	249	386	10	64.5	3893	36	174.8
3. Connor Shaw, South Carolina	11	154	228	7	67.5	1956	17	158.1
4. Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M	13	295	434	9	68.0	3706	26	155.3
5. Tyler Bray, Tennessee	12	268	451	12	59.4	3612	34	146.3
6. Tyler Wilson, Arkansas	11	249	401	13	62.1	3387	21	143.8
7. Dylan Thompson, South Carolina	11	66	127	2	52.0	1027	10	142.7
8. Bo Wallace, Ole Miss	13	235	368	17	63.9	2994	22	142.7
9. Jonathan Wallace, Auburn	9	46	80	4	57.5	720	4	139.6
10. Jordan Rodgers, Vanderbilt	12	191	319	5	59.9	2539	15	139.1

INTERCEPTIONS	G	NO.	YDS	TD	LONG	AVG/G
1. Byron Moore, Tennessee	12	5	88	1	35	0.42
2. Darius Slay, Mississippi State	13	5	101	1	52	0.38
3. HaHa Clinton-Dix, Alabama	14	5	91	0	46	0.36
4. Johnthan Banks, Mississippi State	13	4	124	0	47	0.31
Matt Elam, Florida	13	4	73	0	42	0.31
Tharold Simon, LSU	13	4	43	0	21	0.31
7. Damian Swann, Georgia	14	4	61	0	27	0.29
Robert Lester, Alabama	14	4	51	0	31	0.29
9. Craig Loston, LSU	12	3	103	1	100	0.25
Senquez Golson, Ole Miss	12	3	55	0	21	0.25

RUSHING	G	ATT.	YDS	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M	13	201	1410	7.0	21	108.5
2. Todd Gurley, Georgia	14	222	1385	6.2	17	98.9
3. Eddie Lacy, Alabama	14	204	1322	6.5	17	94.4
4. Mike Gillislee, Florida	13	244	1152	4.7	10	88.6
5. Zac Stacy, Vanderbilt	13	207	1141	5.5	10	87.8
6. Kendial Lawrence, Missouri	12	200	1025	5.1	12	85.4
7. LaDarius Perkins, Mississippi State	12	205	1024	5.0	8	85.3
8. Tre Mason, Auburn	12	171	1002	5.9	8	83.5
9. T.J. Yeldon, Alabama	14	175	1108	6.3	12	79.1
10. Rajion Neal, Tennessee	10	156	708	4.5	5	70.8

SCORING	G	TD	FG	XPT	2XP	PTS	PTS/G
1. Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M	13	21	0	0	0	126	9.7
2. Drew Alleman, LSU	13	0	21	44	0	107	8.2
3. Caleb Sturgis, Florida	13	0	24	34	0	106	8.2
Taylor Bertolet, Texas A&M	13	0	13	67	0	106	8.2
5. Eddie Lacy, Alabama	14	19	0	0	0	114	8.1
6. Bryson Rose, Ole Miss	13	0	18	49	0	103	7.9
7. Todd Gurley, Georgia	14	18	0	0	0	108	7.7
8. Jeremy Shelley, Alabama	14	0	11	69	0	102	7.3
9. Carey Spear, Vanderbilt	13	0	20	27	0	87	6.7

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	RUSH	PASS	PLAYS	TOT	YDS/G
1. Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M	13	1410	3706	635	5116	393.5
2. Tyler Wilson, Arkansas	11	7	3387	442	3394	308.5
3. Tyler Bray, Tennessee	12	-34	3612	466	3578	298.2
4. Aaron Murray, Georgia	14	-68	3893	445	3825	273.2
5. Bo Wallace, Ole Miss	13	390	2994	511	3384	260.3
6. Tyler Russell, Mississippi State	13	-5	2897	437	2892	222.5
7. Jordan Rodgers, Vanderbilt	12	71	2539	410	2610	217.5
8. Connor Shaw, South Carolina	11	435	1956	359	2391	217.4
9. AJ McCarron, Alabama	14	4	2933	363	2937	209.8
10. James Franklin, Missouri	9	122	1562	322	1684	187.1

PUNTING	G	NO.	YDS	LG	AVG.
1. Kyle Christy, Florida	13	66	3023	62	45.8
2. Dylan Breeding, Arkansas	12	53	2416	72	45.6
3. Richard Kent, Vanderbilt	13	59	2652	67	44.9
4. Brad Wing, LSU	11	59	2643	69	44.8
5. Cody Mandell, Alabama	14	50	2214	61	44.3
6. Michael Palardy, Tennessee	12	36	1551	66	43.1
7. Trey Barrow, Missouri	12	68	2925	69	43.0
8. Landon Foster, Kentucky	12	61	2617	58	42.9
9. Ryan Epperson, Texas A&M	13	41	1721	61	42.0
10. Collin Barber, Georgia	14	60	2488	60	41.5

RECEIVING YDS/GAME	G	REC.	YDS	TD	AVG/G
1. Cobi Hamilton, Arkansas	12	90	1335	5	111.2
2. Jordan Matthews, Vanderbilt	13	94	1323	8	101.8
3. Justin Hunter, Tennessee	12	73	1083	9	90.2
4. Mike Evans, Texas A&M	13	82	1105	5	85.0
5. Donte Moncrief, Ole Miss	13	66	979	10	75.3
6. Amari Cooper, Alabama	14	59	1000	11	71.4
7. Chad Bumphis, Mississippi State	13	58	922	12	70.9
8. Ryan Swope, Texas A&M	13	72	913	8	70.2
9. Tavarres King, Georgia	14	42	950	9	67.9
10. Emory Blake, Auburn	12	50	789	3	65.8

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG/P	TD	AVG/G
1. Texas A&M	13	1025	7261	7.1	74	558.5
2. Tennessee	12	890	5711	6.4	53	475.9
3. Georgia	14	924	6547	7.1	69	467.6
4. Alabama	14	898	6237	6.9	68	445.5
5. Ole Miss	13	962	5509	5.7	49	423.8
6. Arkansas	12	826	5042	6.1	35	420.2
7. Mississippi State	13	848	4965	5.9	46	381.9
8. Vanderbilt	13	874	4936	5.6	42	379.7
9. South Carolina	13	856	4895	5.7	48	376.5
10. LSU	13	883	4865	5.5	41	374.2
11. Missouri	12	867	4277	4.9	31	356.4
12. Florida	13	827	4342	5.3	35	334.0
13. Kentucky	12	790	3780	4.8	26	315.0
14. Auburn	12	695	3660	5.3	24	305.0

TOTAL DEFENSE	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG/P	TD	AVG/G
1. Alabama	14	837	3500	4.2	18	250.0
2. Florida	13	857	3727	4.3	19	286.7
3. LSU	13	897	3999	4.5	29	307.6
4. South Carolina	13	883	4102	4.6	27	315.5
5. Vanderbilt	13	914	4341	4.7	24	333.9
6. Georgia	14	967	5009	5.2	30	357.8
7. Ole Miss	13	910	4886	5.4	39	375.8
8. Mississippi State	13	918	5036	5.5	33	387.4
9. Texas A&M	13	972	5073	5.2	35	390.2
10. Missouri	12	852	4688	5.5	45	390.7
11. Kentucky	12	848	4692	5.5	46	391.0
12. Arkansas	12	859	4919	5.7	45	409.9
13. Auburn	12	842	5046	6.0	43	420.5
14. Tennessee	12	923	5656	6.1	51	471.3

KICKOFF RETURNS	G	NO	YDS	TD	AVG.
1. Missouri	12	35	864	2	24.7
2. LSU	13	31	744	0	24.0
3. Alabama	14	21	503	1	24.0
4. Florida	13	36	835	1	23.2
5. Mississippi State	13	44	1016	1	23.1
6. Auburn	12	36	808	1	22.4
7. Georgia	14	32	709	1	22.2
8. Vanderbilt	13	40	874	0	21.9
9. South Carolina	13	26	563	0	21.7
10. Kentucky	12	48	1009	0	21.0
11. Tennessee	12	51	1046	1	20.5
12. Ole Miss	13	43	861	1	20.0
13. Texas A&M	13	35	697	0	19.9
14. Arkansas	12	31	566	0	18.3

SCORING OFFENSE	G	TD	FG	XPT	2XP	DXP	SAF	PTS	AVG
1. Texas A&M	13	78	13	69	0	1	0	578	44.5
2. Alabama	14	71	15	69	1	0	0	542	38.7
3. Georgia	14	72	8	63	3	0	2	529	37.8
4. Tennessee	12	56	15	49	1	0	1	434	36.2
5. South Carolina	13	54	11	51	0	1	0	410	31.5
6. Ole Miss	13	51	18	49	0	0	0	409	31.5
7. Vanderbilt	13	47	20	46	0	0	1	390	30.0
8. LSU	13	46	21	44	1	0	1	387	29.8
9. Mississippi State	13	49	14	47	0	0	0	383	29.5
10. Florida	13	39	24	36	1	0	0	344	26.5
11. Missouri	12	39	14	33	0	0	0	309	25.8
12. Arkansas	12	35	13	33	0	0	0	282	23.5
13. Auburn	12	27	11	27	0	0	1	224	18.7
14. Kentucky	12	27	8	27	0	0	1	215	17.9

SCORING DEFENSE	G	TD	FG	XPT	2XP	DXP	SAF	PTS	AVG
1. Alabama	14	20	5	18	0	0	0	153	10.9
2. Florida	13	21	14	18	0	1	0	188	14.5
3. LSU	13	29	10	24	0	0	0	228	17.5
4. South Carolina	13	27	17	24	0	0	0	237	18.2
5. Vanderbilt	13	27	18	23	2	0	0	243	18.7
6. Georgia	14	34	13	30	1	0	0	275	19.6
7. Texas A&M	13	36	12	29	1	0	0	283	21.8
8. Mississippi State	13	37	15	36	0	0	0	303	23.3
9. Ole Miss	13	44	17	40	1	0	1	359	27.6
10. Auburn	12	44	10	44	0	0	1	340	28.3
11. Missouri	12	45	9	40	1	0	1	341	28.4
12. Arkansas	12	47	13	44	0	0	0	365	30.4
13. Kentucky	12	48	13	41	2	0	0	372	31.0
14. Tennessee	12	53	20	46	2	0	0	428	35.7

PUNT RETURN AVG	G	NO	YDS	TD	AVG.
1. Missouri	12	28	421	3	15.0
2. South Carolina	13	30	427	2	14.2
3. Florida	13	18	249	1	13.8
4. Texas A&M	13	34	452	1	13.3
5. Tennessee	12	22	261	1	11.9
6. Vanderbilt	13	35	366	3	10.5
7. Alabama	14	34	337	0	9.9
8. LSU	13	36	327	2	9.1
9. Auburn	12	18	161	0	8.9
10. Georgia	14	27	203	0	7.5
11. Kentucky	12	22	165	0	7.5
12. Mississippi State	13	23	171	0	7.4
13. Arkansas	12	21	124	0	5.9
14. Ole Miss	13	24	134	0	5.6

RUSHING OFFENSE	G	ATT	YDS	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Texas A&M	13	533	3147	5.9	46	242.1
2. Alabama	14	570	3185	5.6	37	227.5
3. Florida	13	539	2440	4.5	22	187.7
4. Georgia	14	525	2556	4.9	32	182.6
5. Ole Miss	13	551	2260	4.1	25	173.8
6. LSU	13	527	2258	4.3	29	173.7
7. Vanderbilt	13	524	2162	4.1	25	166.3
8. Tennessee	12	413	1924	4.7	18	160.3
9. Auburn	12	438	1781	4.1	16	148.4
10. Mississippi State	13	424	1874	4.4	18	144.2
11. Kentucky	12	403	1665	4.1	13	138.8
12. Missouri	12	453	1662	3.7	16	138.5
13. South Carolina	13	491	1800	3.7	19	138.5
14. Arkansas	12	367	1424	3.9	12	118.7

RUSHING DEFENSE	G	ATT	YARDS	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Alabama	14	440	1069	2.4	10	76.4
2. Florida	13	413	1229	3.0	12	94.5
3. LSU	13	440	1321	3.0	14	101.6
4. South Carolina	13	504	1569	3.1	9	120.7
5. Arkansas	12	440	1489	3.4	21	124.1
6. Ole Miss	13	483	1681	3.5	17	129.3
7. Texas A&M	13	487	1814	3.7	18	139.5
8. Vanderbilt	13	482	1848	3.8	17	142.2
9. Missouri	12	451	1791	4.0	26	149.2
10. Kentucky	12	481	1935	4.0	25	161.2
11. Mississippi State	13	504	2153	4.3	16	165.6
12. Georgia	14	616	2550	4.1	17	182.1
13. Tennessee	12	477	2266	4.8	25	188.8
14. Auburn	12	484	2371	4.9	23	197.6

PUNTING	G	NO	YDS	AVG/P	RET	AVG	TB	NET/P
1. Arkansas	12	54	2416	44.7	152	2.8	3	40.8
2. LSU	13	71	3167	44.6	59	0.8	11	40.7
3. Florida	13	68	3038	44.7	161	2.4	6	40.5
4. Mississippi State	13	57	2340	41.1	6	0.1	3	39.9
5. Texas A&M	13	41	1721	42.0	70	1.7	1	39.8
6. Alabama	14	50	2214	44.3	117	2.3	6	39.5
7. Kentucky	12	61	2617	42.9	150	2.5	3	39.5
8. Vanderbilt	13	61	2719	44.6	214	3.5	5	39.4
9. Auburn	12	70	2783	39.8	4	0.1	4	38.6
10. Tennessee	12	56	2278	40.7	133	2.4	3	37.2
11. Georgia	14	68	2784	40.9	156	2.3	6	36.9
12. Missouri	12	70	2937	42.0	313	4.5	3	36.6
13. Ole Miss	13	58	2350	40.5	189	3.3	2	36.6
14. South Carolina	13	58	2242	38.7	52	0.9	5	36.0

PASS OFFENSE	G	COMP	ATT	INT	PCT.	YDS	AVG.	TD	AVG/G
1. Texas A&M	13	329	492	10	66.9	4114	8.4	28	316.5
2. Tennessee	12	285	477	14	59.7	3787	7.9	35	315.6
3. Arkansas	12	272	459	16	59.3	3618	7.9	23	301.5
4. Georgia	14	254	399	11	63.7	3991	10.0	37	285.1
5. Ole Miss	13	261	411	18	63.5	3249	7.9	24	249.9
6. South Carolina	13	225	365	9	61.6	3095	8.5	29	238.1
7. Mississippi State	13	249	424	10	58.7	3091	7.3	28	237.8
8. Alabama	14	219	328	3	66.8	3052	9.3	31	218.0
9. Missouri	12	228	414	14	55.1	2615	6.3	15	217.9
10. Vanderbilt	13	207	350	5	59.1	2774	7.9	17	213.4
11. LSU	13	208	356	7	58.4	2607	7.3	12	200.5
12. Kentucky	12	220	387	10	56.8	2115	5.5	13	176.2
13. Auburn	12	147	257	15	57.2	1879	7.3	8	156.6
14. Florida	13	183	288	5	63.5	1902	6.6	13	146.3

PASS DEFENSE	G	COMP	ATT	INT	PCT.	YDS	AVG.	TD	AVG/G
1. Alabama	14	217	397	18	54.7	2431	6.1	8	173.6
2. Georgia	14	200	351	13	57.0	2459	7.0	13	175.6
3. Vanderbilt	13	232	432	11	53.7	2493	5.8	7	191.8
4. Florida	13	231	444	20	52.0	2498	5.6	7	192.2
5. South Carolina	13	213	379	15	56.2	2533	6.7	18	194.8
6. LSU	13	254	457	18	55.6	2678	5.9	15	206.0
7. Mississippi State	13	265	414	19	64.0	2883	7.0	17	221.8
8. Auburn	12	235	358	2	65.6	2675	7.5	20	222.9
9. Kentucky	12	247	367	5	67.3	2757	7.5	21	229.8
10. Missouri	12	261	401	7	65.1	2897	7.2	19	241.4
11. Ole Miss	13	268	427	15	62.8	3205	7.5	22	246.5
12. Texas A&M	13	281	485	12	57.9	3259	6.7	17	250.7
13. Tennessee	12	272	446	12	61.0	3390	7.6	26	282.5
14. Arkansas	12	262	419	6	62.5	3430	8.2	24	285.8

TURNOVER MARGIN	G	+FUM	+INT	TOT	FUM	-INT	-TOT	-MAR
1. LSU	13	15	18	33	10	7	17	+16
Mississippi State	13	14	19	33	7	10	17	+16
3. Florida	13	10	20	30	10	5	15	+15
4. Alabama	14	11	18	29	12	3	15	+14
5. Georgia	14	17	13	30	8	11	19	+11
6. South Carolina	13	9	15	24	11	9	20	+4
7. Missouri	12	16	7	23	8	14	22	+1
8. Vanderbilt	13	7	11	18	13	5	18	+0
9. Ole Miss	13	13	15	28	11	18	29	-1
10. Kentucky	12	7	5	12	6	10	16	-4
11. Texas A&M	13	4	12	16	11	10	21	-5
12. Tennessee	12	5	12	17	8	14	22	-5
13. Auburn	12	11	2	13	10	15	25	-12
14. Arkansas	12	6	6	12	15	16	31	-19

TEAM STATISTICS

TEXAS A&M AGGIES

For more coverage of the Aggies, visit texasaandm.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Clarence McKinney **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mark Snyder** **STADIUM: Kyle Field: 83,002**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
11-2 overall, 6-2 SEC (T-2nd, West)

COACH:
Kevin Sumlin — At Texas A&M: 11-2, 1 year; overall: 46-19, 5 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
11; 6 offense, 4 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Johnny Manziel, RB Ben Malena, RB Brandon Williams, WR Mike Evans, LT Jake Matthews, RT Cedric Ogbuehi, LB Steven Jenkins, CB Deshazor Everett

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Texas A&M led the SEC by averaging 44.5 points and 558.6 yards per game last season, and with the return of Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel, along with wide receiver Mike Evans, running back Ben Malena and an offensive line filled with future NFL Draft picks, the Aggies could be even more explosive in 2013.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
If a game comes down to a last-second field goal attempt, it could be trouble for the Aggies. Taylor Bertolet needs to be more accurate this season, and the Aggies' defensive front seven must prove that it can hold its own with so many new faces in the lineup.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Ryan Swope, LT Luke Joeckel, DE Damontre Moore, DL Spencer Nealy, LB Sean Porter, LB Jonathan Stewart

OVERVIEW:
A year ago, skeptics wondered how long it would take for the Aggies to win in the SEC. One year later, A&M believes it features enough offensive talent to win it all. If Mark Snyder can again punch all the right defensive buttons and A&M can beat Alabama for a second straight year, don't put anything past Kevin Sumlin, Johnny Manziel and Co.

It's All Possible: A&M Aims High in 2013 and Beyond

Texas A&M officials and the 12th Man Foundation announced plans this spring for the largest stadium renovation project in the history of college athletics. Once completed, the proposed $450 million transformation will increase Kyle Field's seating capacity to about 102,000, while adding numerous club-seating areas and high-end suites.

The timing of the announcement — following the Aggies' historic 2012 SEC debut and in advance of perhaps the most highly anticipated season in school history — is not coincidental.

The 12th Man Foundation, the fundraising organization of A&M athletics, had been discussing Kyle Field construction options for roughly three years prior to the official announcement. But in light of what Kevin Sumlin, Johnny Manziel and the rest of the Aggies did last year, A&M unveiled a project in the spring that would have likely seemed unfathomable prior to Nov. 10, 2012.

That's the day A&M stunned No. 1 Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Manziel enjoyed his "Heisman moment" and virtually everything — especially expectations — changed in the Aggie universe. Following an 11-win season in which Manziel went from unheralded redshirt to the most recognizable player in college football, nothing seems impossible anymore for A&M.

The Aggies are dreaming bigger than ever. A&M has its sights set on winning the SEC in 2013 and becoming the league's eighth consecutive national title winner. To do that, the Aggies likely will need to slay the giant again, as Alabama visits Kyle Field on Sept. 14.

Immediately after A&M's spring game — five months in advance of the Tide's College Station visit — Manziel was already speaking in beast-butchering terms.

"The big conversation we had before Alabama (last year) was to be a dragon slayer," Manziel said.

"Now, there's a big dragon out there for us with all of the people doubting A&M, the people doubting me (and saying) last year was a fluke. So that's a chip on my shoulder and a dragon I need to slay this year."

With numerous holes to fill on defense, the Aggies may need Manziel to produce some fairy tale-like feats to beat Bama again, win their first conference title since 1998 and claim their first national championship since 1939.

Such expectations would have seemed outlandish in Aggieland not so long ago. But now, A&M appears capable of building something magnificent ... in addition to the stadium.

OFFENSE

Prior to last season, plenty of skeptics questioned whether Sumlin's Aggies could be effective running the spread offense in the SEC. After leading the league in rushing, passing, total offense, scoring, first downs and third-down conversions, Texas A&M no longer has many doubters.

And even with the loss of the school's all-time leading receiver (Ryan Swope) and perhaps the best offensive lineman to ever play for the Aggies (2012 Outland Trophy winner Luke Joeckel), it's conceivable that the 2013 offense could be better than the 2012 version.

It all starts with Johnny Manziel, who last year became the first SEC player to ever account for 5,000 yards, also leading the league in rushing. The deceptively fast and elusive Manziel evolved throughout last year, as former offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury continually gained more confidence in his ability to protect the football and

Johnny Manziel
Photo by Doug Holleman

make things happen on the run.

New offensive coordinator Clarence McKinney vows to utilize Manziel's multiple talents and the full scope of the up-tempo offense right from the start. Manziel, who has added some strength and appears to possess even more poise in the pocket, says he's ready for anything, including whatever opposing defensive coordinators have been scheming especially for him.

"Some (coaches) might have one game (circled) on their calendar, but I doubt it," said Manziel, who had 516 total yards in the Cotton Bowl against Oklahoma.

"I heard the same talk prior to the Cotton Bowl when (OU) had a month to prepare. That didn't really work out for them."

Part of Manziel's confidence regarding this season can be attributed to the numerous weapons he has at his disposal. His favorite receiving target, 6-5 sophomore Mike Evans, proved to be a nightmare for many opposing defensive backs last year, as Evans caught 82 passes for 1,105 yards.

A couple of newcomers, 6-5 freshman wideout Ricky Seals-Jones and 6-6 transfer tight end Cameron Clear could prove to be equally difficult to defend.

The running back stable is also stocked with thoroughbreds, as A&M welcomes back starting tailback Ben Malena, a punishing runner who averaged 5.9 yards per carry last season, and speedster Trey Williams, a breakaway threat whenever he touches the ball. Two tremendously talented transfers — Brandon Williams from Oklahoma and Tra Carson from Oregon — provide plenty of productive options.

And even with Joeckel forgoing his senior season, the offensive line has a chance to be among the best in school history.

Jake Matthews, a star at right tackle last year, chose to return for his senior year for the opportunity to play left tackle and play with his younger brother, Mike, who replaces Patrick Lewis at center. Junior Cedric Ogbuehi moves from guard to right tackle, while Jarvis Harrison and Germain Ifedi round out an extremely impressive group of starters.

DEFENSE

The Aggies don't need to be dominant on defense to contend for an SEC title. Decent would suffice, and A&M could be at least that good if a couple of injured defensive linemen can return at top form.

Nose guard Kirby Ennis (knee) and end Julien Obioha (back) missed spring practices while recovering from injuries. The Aggies need them both, as Ennis is a 300-pound run-stopping road block, while the athletic Obioha was one of the most pleasant surprises of 2012.

End Gavin Stansbury and tackle

Jake Matthews
Photo by Jeff Goldberg

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Johnny Manziel*	So.	First freshman Heisman winner knows no limits.	Matt Joeckel, Jr.
RB	Ben Malena*	Sr.	195 pounds of pure smash-mouth pounding.	Brandon Williams, So.
WR	Mike Evans*	So.	Clutch WR ranked third last year in SEC in receptions.	Edward Pope, Fr.
WR	Malcome Kennedy	Jr.	Appears ready to become a go-to receiving target.	Cameron Clear, Jr.
WR	Sabian Holmes	So.	Caught only six passes last year, but has explosive speed.	Nehemiah Hicks, Sr.
WR	Derel Walker	Sr.	Played sparingly last year, but made some big catches.	JaQuay Williams, Fr.
LT	Jake Matthews*	Sr.	Expected to be early first-round NFL pick in 2014.	Jeremiah Stuckey, So.
LG	Jarvis Harrison*	Jr.	18 career starts and he's constantly improving.	Shep Klinke, Sr.
C	Mike Matthews	So.	Impeccable bloodlines with tough task to replace Lewis.	Ben Compton, Jr.
RG	Germain Ifedi	Fr.	Impressed coaches during the spring with raw skills.	Garrett Gramling, Jr.
RT	Cedric Ogbuehi*	Jr.	Extremely athletic and talented All-SEC candidate.	Joseph Cheek, So.
K	Taylor Bertolet*	So.	Needs to prove he can be more accurate.	Josh Lambo, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Julien Obioha*	So.	Made 12 starts prior to back injury at end of season.	Tyrell Taylor, Jr.
NG	Kirby Ennis*	Sr.	Big presence in middle of line started 11 games last year.	Polo Manukainiu, Fr.
DT	Alonzo Williams	So.	Played in seven games last season, made five tackles.	Jordan Points, Fr.
DE	Gavin Stansbury	Jr.	Plenty of potential after seeing action in 11 games in 2012.	Brandon Alexander, So.
LB	Steven Jenkins*	Sr.	79 tackles, two sacks and a huge interception last year.	Brett Wade, Fr.
LB	Donnie Baggs	Jr.	Hard-hitting inside LB made strong impression in spring.	Shaun Ward, Jr.
LB	Tommy Sanders	Jr.	JC transfer possesses great athleticism, instincts.	Nate Askew, Sr.
CB	Deshazor Everett*	Jr.	Beginning to develop into All-SEC-caliber cornerback.	Alex Sezer, Fr.
CB	De'Vante Harris	So.	Showed in spring that he made major strides in tackling.	Tramain Jacobs, Sr.
SS	Howard Matthews	Jr.	One of most improved players from start of last year.	Toney Hurd Jr., Sr.
FS	Floyd Raven	Jr.	Big-hitting safety who can cover like a corner.	Clay Honeycutt, Jr.
P	Drew Kaser	So.	Solid during the spring as Ryan Epperson's replacement.	Evan Harmon, Fr.

*Returning Starter

AGGIES RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Ricky Seals-Jones
The loss of two senior starters opens up an opportunity for Seals-Jones on the outside. He's an accomplished basketball player and those skills (footwork, hand-eye coordination) should enable him to follow in the footsteps of sophomore Mike Evans, who traveled a similar road to become A&M's leading receiver last season.

Justin Manning
The Aggies lost two members of their rotation at defensive tackle last season and Manning is a prospect who has a great first step. He already plays with excellent technique. He knows how to use his hands well to play off of blockers.

Isaiah Golden
Unlike Manning, Golden played in a lower classification in high school but already has SEC size and has freakish athleticism. He and Manning gave fans a glimpse of the future when they played a series in a postseason all-star game and helped force a three and out.

THE SLEEPER

Brett Wade
Linebacker Brett Wade was considered a step slow for some schools, but he's a vicious hitter who enrolled at midterm and had established himself on the second team by the end of the spring.

Committments	31
Average Stars	3.45
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	15
★★★☆☆	15
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	107
National Rank: 11	SEC: 6

2014 NEEDS: The Aggies signed just one rush end in the 2013 class and with a dearth of them on campus, this position has emerged as a high priority and the Aggies will probably take at least three signees who can play the position. In addition, A&M will lose four offensive linemen from the depth chart after the 2014 season and need some prospects that can step in and make an impact after their redshirt freshman season on campus, especially at tackle.

— by Jeff Tarpley/AggieYell.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Joas Aguilar	OL	6-5	295	★★★	North Richland Hills, TX	Birdville
Rated as the No. 39 offensive tackle in the country by Rivals.com…Offers great size and explosiveness as exemplified by his state rankings in both the shot put and discus.						
Jay Arnold	DE	6-4	235	★★★	Rockwall, TX	Rockwall-Heath
Rated as the 31st-best strongside defensive end by Rivals.com….13 sacks as a junior.						
Reggie Chevis	LB	6-2	238	★★★	Houston, TX	Sharpstown
Rated as the 40th-best inside linebacker in the country by Rivals.com…102 tackles and 12 sacks as a junior…mid-term enrollee.						
Darian Claiborne	LB	6-1	225	★★★	Port Allen, LA	Port Allen
Rated as the 19th-best inside linebacker in the country by Rivals.com…Had over 100 tackles as a linebacker and nearly 3,000 yards of total offense as a quarterback as a junior.						
Cameron Clear	TE	6-6	285	★★★	Yuma, AZ	Arizona Western C.C.
Rated as the 47th-best junior college prospect in the country by Rivals.com….Starter coming out of spring practice.						
Victor Davis	DB	6-1	178	★★★	Rosenberg, TX	Terry
Rated as the 35th-best safety in the country by Rivals.com….Rated as a safety, but played cornerback his senior season and is expected to fill the same role at A&M.						
Noel Ellis	DB	5-10	170	★★★★	New Orleans, LA	Edna Karr
Rated as the ninth-best prospect in the state of Louisiana the 19th-best cornerback in the country by Rivals.com…registered nearly 20 interceptions in his high school career…also an accomplished return specialist.						
Tavares Garner	DB	6-0	170	★★★★	Manvel, TX	Manvel
Rated as the 27th-best cornerback in the country by Rivals.com and also as the 40th-best prospect in the state of Texas…played in the Offense-Defense Bowl and was named as one of the top performers at the game.						
Isaiah Golden	DT	6-2	320	★★★★	Carthage, TX	Carthage
Rated as the eighth-best defensive tackle in the country by Rivals.com and the 15th-best prospect in the state of Texas…played in the Army All-American Game in San Antonio and was in the Rivals 100 Challenge.						
Laquvionte Gonzalez	ATH	5-10	148	★★★★	Cedar Hill, TX	Cedar Hill
Rated No. 234 in the Rivals.com 250 and the 30th-best prospect in the state of Texas…. Scored 26 touchdowns as a senior or about once every eight touches.						
Daeshon Hall	DE	6-6	240	★★★★	Lancaster, TX	Lancaster
Rated as a four-star by Rivals.com and the 15th-best defensive end in the country… Registered 18 sacks as a senior and was named AP's Defensive Player of the Year.						
Kenny Hill	QB	6-1	205	★★★★	Southlake, TX	Carroll
Rated as the fourth-best dual-threat quarterback in the country by Rivals.com…Led his team to the Class 5A Division I state title as a junior…Accounted for 60 scores rushing and receiving as a senior.						
Sebastian Larue	WR	5-10	175	★★★★	Santa Monica, CA	Santa Monica
Rated as the 210th-best player in the country by Rivals.com and the 24th-best receiver…Named as one of the top prospects at the Under Armour All-Star Game.						
Justin Manning	DT	6-2	275	★★★★	Dallas, TX	Kimball
Rated as a top 10 prospect in the state of Texas by Rivals.com and the No. 6 defensive tackle in the country…Played in the Army All-American Game.						
Jordan Mastrogiovanni	LB	6-3	225	★★★	Dallas, TX	Jesuit
Rated as the 30th-best inside linebacker by Rivals.com…Led Jesuit to the Class 5A playoffs as a senior.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Kameron Miles	DB	6-2	200	★★★★	Mesquite, TX	West Mesquite
Rated as the 139th-best prospect in the country by Rivals.com and the 17th-best safety in the country….Had five interceptions as a junior…Aggies flipped him from Tennessee.						
Kyrion Parker	WR	6-3	185	★★★★	Manvel, TX	Manvel
Rated 236th in the Rivals250 and the 31st-best prospect in the state of Texas…did not play football as a junior but had 42 receptions for 899 yards and 21 touchdowns as a senior.						
Jordan Points	DE	6-3	260	★★★	Rockwall, TX	Rockwall-Heath
Rated as a three-star by Rivals.com…Enrolled at mid-term and started in A&M's spring game…Double-digit sacker as both a junior and senior.						
Tommy Sanders	LB	6-2	220	★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler County C.C.
Rated as a three star by Rivals.com ….Enrolled at mid-term and was a starter at the beginning of spring practice…Had 71 tackles last season with 9.5 sacks.						
Ricky Seals-Jones	ATH	6-5	220	★★★★	Sealy, TX	Sealy
The number two-ranked athlete in the country per Rivals.com and the No. 3 prospect in the state of Texas…played in the Army All-American Game.						
Alex Sezer	ATH	5-9	180	★★	Orange, TX	Little Cypress-Mauriceville
Enrolled at mid-term and was second team coming out of spring practice…. Participated in the 100 and 200 meter events at the state track meet as a junior.						
Kohl Stewart	QB	6-3	185	★★★★	Houston, TX	St. Pius X
Ranked as the 15th-best pro-style quarterback in the country by Rivals.com and the 38th-best prospect in the state of Texas.						
Jeremiah Stuckey	OL	6-7	290	★★★	San Francisco, CA	City College of San Francisco
Rated as the 67th-best junior college prospect in the country by Rivals.com…Enrolled at mid-term and was second team coming out of spring practice.						
Jeremy Tabuyo	WR	5-11	178	★★★	Honolulu, HI	St. Louis
Rated as the fourth-best prospect in the state of Hawaii prior to the 2013 season by Rivals.com…Overcame a torn ACL as a junior to catch 49 passes as a senior.						
Brett Wade	LB	6-1	225	★★★	Kennedale, TX	Kennedale
Rated as the 33rd-best inside linebacker in the country by Rivals.com…Had over 100 tackles as both a junior and a senior…Was second team coming out of spring practice.						
Hardreck Walker	DT	6-2	280	★★★★	Houston, TX	Westfield
Rated as the 19th-best defensive tackle by Rivals.com and the 37th-best prospect in the state of Texas…Helped lead Spring Westfield to a 12-1 record as a senior.						
Shaan Washington	ATH	6-3	210	★★★	Alexandria, LA	Alexandria
Rated as the 37th-best prospect in the state of Louisiana by Rivals.com….Played both linebacker and receiver.						
James White	RB	6-0	190	★★★	Pearland, TX	Dawson
Rated as the 28th-best running back in the country by Rivals.com…Rushed for over 4,000 yards and 51 touchdowns as a junior and senior.						
Jonathan Wiggins	DB	6-3	190	★★★	Houston, TX	Alief Taylor
Rated as a three-star by Rivals.com….Chose the Aggies over Utah, Texas Tech and West Virginia.						
JaQuay Williams	WR	6-3	210	★★★★	Fork Union, VA	Fork Union Military Academy
Ranked as a four-star by Rivals.com during a year at Fork Union Military Academy… Enrolled at mid-term and was second team coming out of spring practice.						
Ishmael Wilson	OL	6-5	275	★★★★	Dallas, TX	Bishop Dunne
Ranked as a four-star by Rivals.com and as the 17th-best offensive tackle in the country and the 27th-best prospect in the state of Texas.						

AGGIES SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
41	Brandon Alexander	DL	6-6	255	So.	Brenham
65	John-Albert Arechiga	OL	6-2	300	So.	Houston
9	Nate Askew	LB	6-4	225	Sr.	San Antonio
36	Donnie Baggs	LB	6-1	230	Jr.	League City
43	Justin Bass	LB	6-2	217	Jr.	Plano
24	Taylor Bertolet	PLK	5-9	174	So.	Reading, PA
26	Devonta Burns	DB	6-0	201	So.	Arlington
80	Ryan Buscha	WR	5-8	175	Jr.	Round Rock
21	Tra Carson	RB	6-0	227	So.	Texarkana
79	Joseph Cheek	OL	6-7	300	So.	Seguin
51	Reggie Chevis	LB	6-1	250	Fr.	Houston
87	Cameron Clear	TE	6-6	270	Jr.	Memphis, TN
68	Ben Compton	OL	6-4	307	Jr.	Friendswood
6	Matt Davis	QB	6-2	206	Fr.	Houston
27	Brice Dolezal	RB	5-9	170	So.	Austin
42	Kirby Ennis	DL	6-4	300	Sr.	Huntsville
13	Mike Evans	WR	6-5	225	So.	Galveston
29	Deshazor Everett	DB	6-0	185	Jr.	DeRidder, LA
17	Ascension Fierro	QB	6-1	196	Jr.	Smithville
35	Reece Fierro	WR	6-1	190	Jr.	Smithville
59	Isaac Flores	DL	6-3	300	Fr.	Santa Rosa
30	Johntel Franklin	DB	6-2	200	Sr.	Milwaukee, WI
54	Alex Freeman	DS	6-1	228	Jr.	Austin
19	Matt Fritsche	DB	6-3	171	So.	Bryan
67	Tyler Godwin	DL	6-3	280	Fr.	Clear Springs
78	Garrett Gramling	OL	6-6	309	Jr.	Denton
60	Nathan Gutekunst	OL	6-6	308	So.	Humble
19	Evan Harmon	P/K	6-3	185	Fr.	Dallas
1	De'Vante Harris	DB	5-10	175	So.	Mesquite
51	Jarvis Harrison	OL	6-4	320	Jr.	Navasota
81	Nehemiah Hicks	TE	6-4	250	Sr.	Hutto
40	Seth Hiddink	PLK	6-4	200	Fr.	Wylie
46	A.J. Hilliard	LB	6-2	210	So.	Klein
23	Sabian Holmes	WR	5-11	175	So.	Southlake
25	Clay Honeycutt	DB	6-2	200	Jr.	Dickinson
4	Toney Hurd, Jr.	DB	5-9	180	Sr.	Missouri City
74	Germain Ifedi	OL	6-5	320	Fr.	Houston
47	Daniel Inglett	TE	6-2	210	So.	San Antonio
7	Tramain Jacobs	DB	6-1	190	Sr.	Covington, LA
45	Steven Jenkins	LB	6-2	220	Sr.	Pensacola, FL
16	Matt Joeckel	QB	6-4	234	Jr.	Arlington
58	Cody Johnson	LB	6-1	220	So.	Anahuac
38	Drew Kaser	P	6-3	220	So.	Strongsville, OH
84	Malcome Kennedy	WR	6-0	200	Jr.	Cayuga
77	Shep Klinke	OL	6-7	305	Sr.	Katy
15	Travis Labhart	WR	5-9	182	Sr.	Dallas
88	Gaston Lamascus	WR	5-6	182	Sr.	Navasota
49	Josh Lambo	PLK	6-0	215	So.	Middleton, WI
63	Ryan Lindblade	OL	6-7	305	Fr.	Richmond
1	Ben Malena	RB	5-8	195	Sr.	Cedar Hill
90	Polo Manukainiu	DL	6-5	270	Fr.	Euless
2	Johnny Manziel	QB	6-1	200	So.	Kerrville
15	Kenneth Marshall	DB	6-0	191	Fr.	South Houston
49	Taylor Martinez	LB	6-0	215	Fr.	Fort Bend
31	Howard Matthews	DB	6-2	200	Jr.	League City
75	Jake Matthews	OL	6-5	305	Sr.	Missouri City
56	Mike Matthews	OL	6-3	280	So.	Missouri City
30	Matthew McCarty	TE	6-5	210	Fr.	San Antonio
14	Conner McQueen	QB	5-10	175	Fr.	Klein
86	Samuel McSwain	WR	6-3	200	Fr.	Ft. Worth
44	Sam Moeller	DB	5-11	186	So.	San Antonio
57	Alvin Munrose	LB	6-1	195	Fr.	Baytown
82	Boone Niederhofer	WR	6-0	180	Fr.	San Antonio
95	Julien Obioha	DL	6-4	255	So.	New Orleans, LA
70	Cedric Ogbuehi	OL	6-5	300	Jr.	Allen
50	Justin Ortega	OL	5-10	235	Jr.	San Antonio
36	Davis Plowman	PLK	5-10	185	Fr.	Roswell, GA
92	Jordan Points	DL	6-3	260	Fr.	Rockwall
18	Edward Pope	WR	6-4	170	Fr.	Carthage
14	Floyd Raven, Sr.	DB	6-2	190	Jr.	Kenner, LA
33	Michael Richardson	LB	6-2	230	So.	DeSoto
32	Rylan Riney	DB	5-11	175	So.	Aledo
89	Ivan Robinson	DL	6-3	270	Jr.	Longville, LA
55	Tommy Sanders	LB	6-2	215	Jr.	Cordele, GA
29	Kyle Serres	PLK	6-4	190	Jr.	Spring
37	Alex Sezer, Jr.	DB	5-9	180	Fr.	Orange
48	Jordan Shephard	WR	6-2	190	So.	Dickinson
53	Caden Smith	OL	6-3	259	So.	Roscoe
72	Gavin Stansbury	DL	6-4	270	Jr.	Franklin, LA
73	Jeremiah Stuckey	OL	6-4	285	So.	Pacifica, CA
39	Marvin Taylor	DB	5-11	187	Fr.	Houston
35	Tyrell Taylor	LB	6-4	230	Jr.	Houston
50	Tyrone Taylor	LB	6-3	240	Fr.	Houston
71	Kimo Tipoti	OL	6-3	320	Fr.	Hurst
34	Blaine Townsend	RB	6-0	230	So.	Wichita Falls
33	Brettain Urbanowski	TE	6-4	233	Jr.	Houston
52	Brett Wade	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	Kennedale
11	Derel Walker	WR	6-2	185	Sr.	Hillsboro
40	Shaun Ward	LB	6-2	244	Jr.	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
31	Seth Wicks	PLK	5-10	165	Fr.	Keller
32	Josh Williard	DB	5-9	175	Fr.	San Antonio
83	Alonzo Williams	DL	6-4	280	So.	Long Beach, CA
28	Brandon Williams	RB	6-0	192	So.	Brookshire
4	Ja'Quay Williams	WR	6-3	210	Fr.	Tyrone, GA
10	LeKendrick Williams	WR	5-8	170	Jr.	Sharpstown
20	Trey Williams	RB	5-8	185	So.	Spring
41	Stephen Young	WR	5-11	185	Sr.	Burnet

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Manziel	13-13	155.3	295	434	9	68.0	3706	26	89	285.1
J. Showers	7-0	132.7	27	44	1	61.4	319	2	80	45.6

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Evans	13-13	82	1105	13.5	5	75	85.0
R. Swope	13-12	72	913	12.7	8	80	70.2
T. Johnson	10-2	30	339	11.3	1	58	33.9

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Manziel	13-13	201	1571	161	1410	7.0	21	72	108.5
B. Malena	13-9	138	826	18	808	5.9	8	59	62.2
C. Michael	11-2	88	432	15	417	4.7	12	40	37.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: D. Moore 85, J. Stewart 81, S. Jenkins 79
Tackles for loss: D. Moore 21, S. Nealy 7.5, S. Porter 6.5
Sacks: D. Moore 12.5, S. Porter 3.5, J. Stewart 2.5
Interceptions: S. Terrell 2, D. Everett 2, eight tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

One of the jewels of A&M's 2013 recruiting class was former Tennessee starting tight end **Cameron Clear**, who played last year at Arizona's Western Junior College.

A&M didn't utilize a tight end much last year, but offensive coordinator **Clarence McKinney** vows to use all 6-6 and 270 pounds of Clear this year.

"We recruited a guy we think is one of the best in the country in Cam," McKinney said. "He's a big guy and he gives you an extra offensive lineman body, he runs well and he catches the ball well."

• Many coaches talk about their offense playing with a rhythm, but **Kevin Sumlin** emphasizes it by playing loud music at practice. He also kicked it up a notch at a Friday night spring practice that was open to the public and attended by 30 to 35 prospective recruits. Sumlin arranged for "DJ Double R" to spin tunes from inside the trailer of an 18-wheeler parked inside Kyle Field, which was a big hit with the recruits.

• During the winter and spring, **Johnny Manziel** attended the Super Bowl, watched numerous NBA games from courtside, posed with NBA stars like LeBron James, tossed out the ceremonial first pitch prior to a Texas Rangers-Anaheim Angels game and was able to do a number of other "cool" activities.

But the most meaningful to Manziel was a visit north of the border to meet rap musician Drake.

"To meet the No. 1 person on my bucket list, and for him to treat me like he did and how that whole trip went for me ... I came back a completely different person," Manziel said on April 20 when he was honored in Kerrville, where he played high school football.

• The Aggies tuned up for its high-profile fall with a spring game that attracted a school-record 45,212 fans and was televised nationally by ESPN.

A&M hammed it up for the cameras with some post-TD celebrations that earned the Aggies some penalties. "We don't get to be on ESPN for a spring game like this every day, so we might as well have fun with it and get the recruits to have fun," Manziel said.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Manziel's impact:** "Without him offensively, where do you think they'd have been? 7-5? Maybe not that good. Without him at quarterback, they're an average football team. Can he come back and do that again? That will be the question. I think A&M will have trouble repeating what it did last year. I don't know that their talent level is quite as good as the elite teams in the conference."

• **On defending Manziel:** "It frustrated our kids, but we said the only way he'll beat us is if we let him run the football. We changed our rush a little bit. We didn't fly up field like other teams did. We kept him in the pocket and made him throw. I think teams will defense him a little bit better (this year). Teams will work on that stuff this spring and fall."

Mike Evans
Photo by Doug Holleman

Alonzo Williams have been impressive at times in reserve spots, but a number of newcomers could also play a prominent role in replacing Damontre Moore and Spencer Nealy.

A&M signed four of the top six defensive linemen in Texas last February, including two tackles, Isaiah Golden and Justin Manning, who could factor into the playing rotation right away. Golden possesses the size (6-2, 320) to be a force in the middle, while Manning may be A&M's most talented defensive line prospect since Ty Warren signed in 1999.

The situation is similar at linebacker, where the Aggies must replace Jonathan Stewart and Sean Porter and hope for the healthy return of a key starter (outside linebacker Steven Jenkins). Jenkins, who finished third on the team in 2012 with 79 tackles, has emerged as a soft-spoken leader with a knack for producing big plays. Jenkins tore his labrum in the Cotton Bowl, but he is expected to be at full strength this fall.

In Jenkins' absence during the spring, transfer outside linebacker Tommy Sanders, from Butler (Kan.) Community College, displayed some impressive speed and play-making abilities. And in the middle, junior Donnie Baggs looked particularly strong during the spring in the 4-3 alignment.

"From day one, Donnie has done a great job of stepping up (during the spring)," new linebackers coach Mark Hagen said. "(Sanders) is very fast and athletic. Even when things are not clicking as fast mentally for him, he can still make up for it (with his athleticism)."

A&M could also receive a lift at linebacker from former receiver Nate Askew, who brings more athleticism to the unit.

The strength of this defense appears to be in the secondary. A&M finished 12th in the SEC last year in passing defense, allowing 250.7 yards per game, but the Aggies should be dramatically improved.

The trio of Howard Matthews, Toney Hurd and Floyd Raven form a tremendous combination at the safety positions, while De'Vante Harris and Deshazor Everett are strong man-to-man cover cornerbacks. Harris has improved his open-field field tackling and provides blanket coverage. Raven is also excellent in man-to-man cover situations, and he's physical enough to play the safety spot.

SPECIAL TEAMS

During the spring, Drew Kaser appeared to be a solid replacement for Ryan Epperson at punter, while the Aggies have

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Johnny Manziel

Already has brought more positive publicity to Texas A&M in one year than probably any other player in school history. ... Led the SEC in rushing with 108.5 per game. ... Led an A&M offense that became the first in SEC history to surpass 7,000 yards in a season. ... Has an uncanny ability to avoid pressure and make things happen on the run. ... Passed for 26 touchdowns and rushed for 21 more in 2012. ... No moment is too big for him.

EMERGING STAR

WR Mike Evans

Caught the biggest pass of 2012 when the Aggies, trailing Ole Miss by 10 in the fourth quarter, faced third-and-19 from their own 3. Utilized all 77 inches of his long frame, leaping up and grabbing the ball over the 5-9 Senquez Golson for a 32-yard gain that ignited the comeback. ... Only began playing football as a high school senior and still has great room for improvement. ... Led A&M last year with 82 catches and 1,105 yards. ... Tough, hard-nosed, fearless over the middle.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Brandon Williams

Former five-star recruit originally signed with Oklahoma in 2011 and averaged nearly five yards per carry while playing in eight games as a true freshman. ... Williams, originally from Brookshire, Texas, decided to transfer to A&M to be closer to his daughter. ... Sat out 2012 season after the transfer. ... Explosive running back who runs the 40-yard dash in 4.47 seconds and has excellent hands as a receiver out of the backfield. ... One of the stars of spring drills.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.2	34
Rushing	165.0	46
Passing	276.9	20
Total	441.9	23
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.9	34
Rushing	130.2	30
Passing	234.2	89
Total	364.3	55
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 5	- 0.38	80

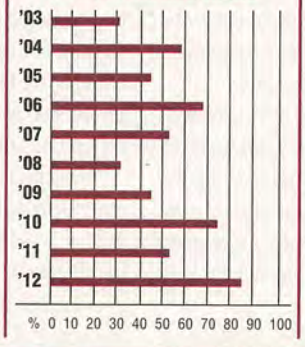
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	39.1	11
Rushing	199.2	24
Passing	291.1	18
Total	490.2	7
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.2	70
Rushing	101.9	12
Passing	276.3	109
Total	378.2	59
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 9	- 0.69	106

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	44.5	4
Rushing	242.1	11
Passing	316.5	14
Total	558.6	3
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.8	26
Rushing	139.5	35
Passing	250.7	86
Total	390.2	57
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 5	- 0.38	86

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

11-2, 6-2

L	FLORIDA	17-20
W	at SMU	48-3
W	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	70-14
W	ARKANSAS	58-10
W	at Ole Miss	30-27
W	at Louisiana Tech	59-57
L	LSU	19-24
W	at Auburn	63-21
W	at Mississippi State	38-13
W	at Alabama	29-24
W	SAM HOUSTON STATE	47-28
W	MISSOURI	59-29
	AT&T Cotton Bowl	
W	vs. Oklahoma	41-13

PLAYER PROFILE

Steven Jenkins
Photo by Doug Holleman

Jenkins Finding a New Home

From her home in Pensacola, Fla., Priscilla Jenkins acknowledges she cried like a baby when the youngest of her six children, Texas A&M outside linebacker Steven Jenkins, first left home in 2010 to play junior college football in Coffeyville, Kan.

Coffeyville is roughly 850 miles from Pensacola, and Jenkins could have accepted scholarship offers from several smaller schools in the Sunshine State, but he believed he could play at a big-time school in one of the power conferences.

"He was my baby — a (premature) baby who was four pounds at birth — and when he left for college he was only 17," Priscilla said.

"I cried when he went to Kansas, and I was worried all over again when he went to Texas A&M. But I am so proud. He's going to be the first person in our family to graduate from college. When that boy graduates, I am going to try to control myself, but I'm not making any guarantees.

"I am going to be praising God, jumping for joy and crying like a baby again. But this time it will be tears of joy. All he has to do now is finish strong."

Jenkins plans to do that — in the classroom and on the football field — where he'll be counted on as a senior to lead a relatively inexperienced defense. Jenkins, who finished third on the team last year with 79 tackles, realizes all eyes are on the defensive front seven as A&M seeks to win its first SEC title.

"I am looking forward to being a leader, building on what we did last year and hopefully competing for an SEC championship," he said. "I feel like this could be our year. If we can all stay focused, there's no telling what we can do. This is going to be a special fall."

Jenkins hopes to produce plenty of plays that generate wild celebrations during the 2013 season, but regardless of what happens on the gridiron, he knows there will be a momentous celebration when he walks the stage at graduation in December.

"I will be the first one in my family to graduate," Jenkins said with a smile. "I know my mother is going to be so happy for me. I just told her all about the Aggie ring and what it means, and she can hardly believe I am going to graduate from this university."

some big-play potential with return specialists such as Trey Williams and Brandon Williams on kickoffs, and De'Vante Harris and Sabian Holmes on punts.

The concern is at place-kicker, where Taylor Bertolet has an exceptionally strong leg, but he struggled with his field goal accuracy last year.

As a freshman in 2012, Bertolet produced 65 touchbacks out of 103 total kickoffs. But, while he was 8 of 9 on field goal attempts from 29 yards or less, he was only 2 of 9 from 30 to 49 yards. He missed two key attempts in a five-point loss to LSU, and he was only 13 of 22 for the season. He also missed seven extra point tries last year.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The game that is circled on virtually everyone's calendar is Sept. 14 when Alabama pays a visit to College Station. If the Aggies can win that game, the schedule certainly plays in A&M's favor.

Unlike last year, when the Aggies were forced to play five road games in a span of six weeks —remarkably A&M won all of them — the 2013 schedule is loaded with long home stretches. The Aggies play four games in a row at home ... twice.

A&M has some potentially difficult road games at Arkansas, Ole Miss, LSU and Missouri, but the Aggies avoid the top three teams from last year's standings in the SEC East (Georgia, Florida and South Carolina).

— Rusty Burson

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 31	RICE	7-6
Sept. 7	SAM HOUSTON STATE	10-3
Sept. 14	ALABAMA	13-1
Sept. 21	SMU	7-6
Sept. 28	at Arkansas	4-8
Oct. 12	at Ole Miss	7-6
Oct. 19	AUBURN	3-9
Oct. 26	VANDERBILT	9-4
Nov. 2	UTEP	3-9
Nov. 9	MISSISSIPPI STATE	8-5
Nov. 23	at LSU	10-3
Nov. 30	at Missouri	5-7

UCF | KNIGHTS

AAC rank: 4 Record: 10-4 C-USA record: 7-1 (T-1st, East) Stadium: Bright House Networks Stadium (45,301)

By Paul Borden

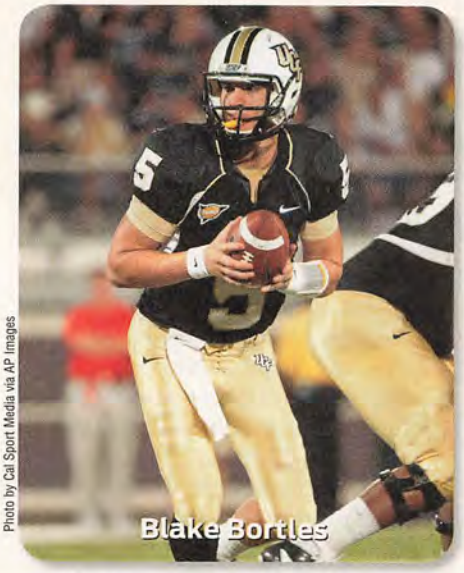


Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

Blake Bortles

"I think with the running backs, we've got a lot of work to get done there."
— Coach George O'Leary

KNIGHTS at a GLANCE

COACH: George O'Leary — At UCF: 60-55, 9 years and overall: 112-88, 16 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Charlie Taaffe
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jim Fleming

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2008
RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 6 offense, 5 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Blake Bortles, RB Storm Johnson, WR Rannell Hall, WR Breshad Perriman, LT Torrian Wilson, LG Jordan McCray, LB Terrance Plummer, SS Clayton Geathers

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: It could be quite an aerial show for the Knights. They have a solid nucleus of receivers to go with an experienced quarterback who will be protected by two veterans on the left side of the line. Two players who recorded more than 100 tackles last year, Geathers (117) and Plummer (108), lead the defense.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Johnson has a big upside, but depth at running back looks to be a concern. The issues on defense are in the secondary, where the Knights are looking for two new starters and depth, and at linebacker, where two new starters must be found.

OFFENSE

With quarterback Blake Bortles doing the pitching and a fleet receiving corps doing the catching, the Knights have a potentially potent passing attack.

Bortles completed 63 percent of his passes last season, throwing for 25 touchdowns with only seven interceptions.

His top three targets — wide receivers J.J. Worton (44 catches, 594 yards), Jeff Godfrey (39-429), and Rannell Hall (35-631) — are back along with Breshad Perriman, who averaged nearly 15 yards on 26 catches as a freshman.

Three starters, including Torrian Wilson and Jordan McCray on the left side, return to the line, and junior Justin Tukes is a returning starter at tight end.

The issue is to find a running game to complement the passing. Latavius Murray ran for more than 1,100 yards with 15 rushing touchdowns in his final season last year, and Brynn Harvey (249 yards) is gone as well.

Talented junior Storm Johnson (507 yards) is the team's top returning rusher.

DEFENSE

The Knights are looking to replace a half-dozen starters on defense equally distributed — two up front, two at linebacker and two in the secondary.

The Knights look solid enough up front. Veteran E.J. Dunston and Western Michigan transfer Demetris Anderson man the tackle spots with promising redshirt freshman Luke Adams and sophomore Thomas Niles at end. Sophomore Deion Green, a good pass rusher, will figure prominently in the rotation at end.

Veteran linebacker Terrance Plummer anchors the middle, flanked by a pair of fellow juniors, Troy Gray and Willie Mitchell. Plummer had a career-high 15 tackles against Ohio State last September.

The Knights had 11 interceptions in 2012, but players who accounted for nine of them are gone.

Cornerback Brandon Alexander (one pick) and safety Clayton Geathers are returning starters in the secondary, but the other two spots are going to be filled with inexperienced newcomers.

There is a potential three-way fight for the vacant corner spot opposite Alexander. A pair of redshirt freshmen — Jeremy Davis and D.J. Killings — competed in the spring and a third — Jacoby Glenn — will figure in when fall camp opens after sitting out the spring.

Converted wide receiver Drico Johnson, also a redshirt freshman, and sophomore Nicco Whigham will compete for the open safety spot.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Junior kicker Shawn Moffitt made good on 10 of 14 field goal attempts in 2012, but he was only 2 of 5 from more than 40 yards. The Knights are looking for a new punter with freshman Caleb Houston the likely successor to Jamie Boyle.

OVERVIEW

Getting to a bowl game for the fourth time in the last five seasons is going to depend on how quickly the Knights get their act together on defense. The offense should be successful as long as the running game produces enough to take some of the pressure of the passing attack.

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Demetris Anderson: The transfer from Western Michigan was impressive in scout team duty last fall and came out of the spring No. 1 on the depth chart. Anderson (6-3, 303) is a good run-stopper who could be dominant if he improves his pass rush.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**5**	**Blake Bortles***	**6-4**	**227**	**Jr.**
RB	8	Storm Johnson	6-1	217	Jr.
WR	81	Breshad Perriman	6-2	209	So.
WR	**9**	**J.J. Worton***	**6-2**	**209**	**Jr.**
WR	2	Jeff Godfrey	5-11	187	Sr.
TE	**84**	**Justin Tukes***	**6-5**	**248**	**Jr.**
LT	**72**	**Torrian Wilson***	**6-4**	**308**	**Jr.**
LG	**63**	**Jordan McCray***	**6-4**	**309**	**Sr.**
C	55	Joey Grant	6-4	280	So.
RG	**64**	**Justin McCray***	**6-4**	**308**	**Sr.**
RT	70	Chris Martin	6-5	282	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	92	Luke Adams	6-3	265	Fr.
DT	**95**	**E.J. Dunston***	**6-2**	**309**	**Sr.**
DT	94	Demetris Anderson	6-3	303	So.
DE	**69**	**Thomas Niles***	**6-2**	**262**	**So.**
LB	23	Willie Mitchell	6-1	233	Jr.
LB	**41**	**Terrance Plummer***	**6-1**	**229**	**Jr.**
LB	57	Troy Gray	6-1	209	Jr.
CB	24	Jeremy Davis	6-0	170	Fr.
CB	**37**	**Brandon Alexander***	**6-1**	**185**	**Jr.**
SS	**26**	**Clayton Geathers***	**6-3**	**202**	**Jr.**
FS	21	Drico Johnson	6-2	200	Fr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**83**	**Shawn Moffitt***	**6-0**	**182**	**Jr.**
P	48	Caleb Houston	6-2	213	Fr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 29	AKRON
Sept. 7	at FIU
Sept. 14	at Penn State
Sept. 28	SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 5	at Memphis
Oct. 18	at Louisville
Oct. 26	CONNECTICUT
Nov. 9	HOUSTON
Nov. 16	at Temple
Nov. 21	RUTGERS
Nov. 29	SOUTH FLORIDA
Dec. 7	at SMU

2012 RESULTS

W	at Akron	56-14
L	at Ohio State	16-31
W	FIU	33-20
L	MISSOURI	16-21
W	EAST CAROLINA	40-20
W	SOUTHERN MISS (2OT)	38-31
W	at Memphis	35-17
W	at Marshall	54-17
W	SMU	42-17
W	at UTEP	31-24
L	at Tulsa	21-23
W	UAB	49-24
	C-USA Championship Game	
L	vs. Tulsa (OT)	27-33
	Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl	
W	vs. Ball State	38-17

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	35.4	25
Rushing	181.8	44
Passing	225.6	68
Total	407.4	57
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.07	27
Rushing	155.9	56
Passing	217.7	41
Total	373.6	42
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 12	+ 0.86	16

VANDERBILT COMMODORES

For more coverage of the Commodores, visit vanderbilt.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Donovan | DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Bob Shoop | STADIUM: Vanderbilt Stadium: 39,773

AT A GLANCE

2012:
9-4 overall, 5-3 SEC (4th, East)

COACH:
James Franklin — At Vanderbilt and overall: 15-11, 2 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 8 offense, 6 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Austyn Carta-Samuels, WR Jordan Matthews, WR Chris Boyd, RB Wesley Tate, DE Walker May, LB Chase Garnham, CB Andre Hal, SS Kenny Ladler

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Vanderbilt has one of the best wide receiver tandems in the league in tall, physical targets Matthews and Boyd. The defensive line lost three starters but could be just as strong thanks to a five-player rotation. Hal and Ladler bolster an experienced secondary.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Carta-Samuels was the Mountain West Freshman of the Year in 2009 but has yet to start a game in the SEC. His durability and timing figure to play a huge role in the offense's success. Tate has big shoes to fill in replacing the program's all-time leading rusher, Zac Stacy. Tight end is a question mark as is the depth behind Matthews and Boyd.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Jordan Rodgers, RB Zac Stacy, CB Trey Wilson, LB Archibald Barnes, DT Rob Lohr

OVERVIEW:
The first nine-win season since 1915 will be a tough act to follow for Franklin and the Commodores. Defense should carry the load early, with six of the top seven tacklers back. Quarterback and running back are the two big question marks on offense. With a soft non-conference schedule, two playmakers at wide receiver and a solid defense, an unprecedented third straight bowl appears highly likely.

Expectations at All-Time High for the Commodores

For the entirety of 2012, speaking beyond one-week seasons for Vanderbilt players was considered taboo.

The Commodores weren't concerned with overall records, winning streaks or clinching bowl eligibility. Every week, they wanted to go 1-0.

But in explaining why he was passing on the NFL Draft and returning for his senior season, wide receiver Jordan Matthews threw caution to the wind and looked ahead.

"I know for a fact that I've got the guys around me who can take this school to an SEC championship next year," Matthews said. "That is the main reason why I am staying. I'm going to devote all my time to making sure Vanderbilt is on the podium in Georgia by season's end next year."

While an SEC title might be a tad ambitious, Vanderbilt believes it can beat anyone in the league.

Fresh off the program's first nine-win season in 97 years and a Music City Bowl victory, the Commodores are aiming higher than ever before. They ride a seven-game winning streak — the longest active streak in the SEC — into 2013.

"I think the sense of belief in the fact we're going to win games this fall is at an all-time high," quarterback Austyn Carta-Samuels said.

"I think there is a lot of confidence in the group of seniors coming back. These are a lot of guys who have proved themselves already on the field. We got to keep working because we know progress can always be made. But we're shooting for the top teams in the country."

That should be no surprise, given who Vanderbilt's coach is.

In just two years, fiery James Franklin has taken the Commodores out of the SEC cellar, to 15 wins and consecutive bowls — a program first.

Duplicating a nine-win season, especially with four preseason Top 10 teams on the schedule, won't be easy. But that's what Franklin was told when he took the job. And the 41-year-old, with his intense motivational techniques, hasn't backed down yet.

"I'm a psycho," Franklin said.

"I'm a psycho when it comes to my family, when it comes to this career, this lifestyle that we have and what we're doing here at Vanderbilt. I'm a psycho about these kids being successful not just on the field, but in life.

"I've said to the players before my greatest strength is my drive and my passion and my greatest weakness is my drive and passion. ... Now the motivation and leadership is really coming from our team."

OFFENSE

Two of the most vital cogs from a potent offense are gone.

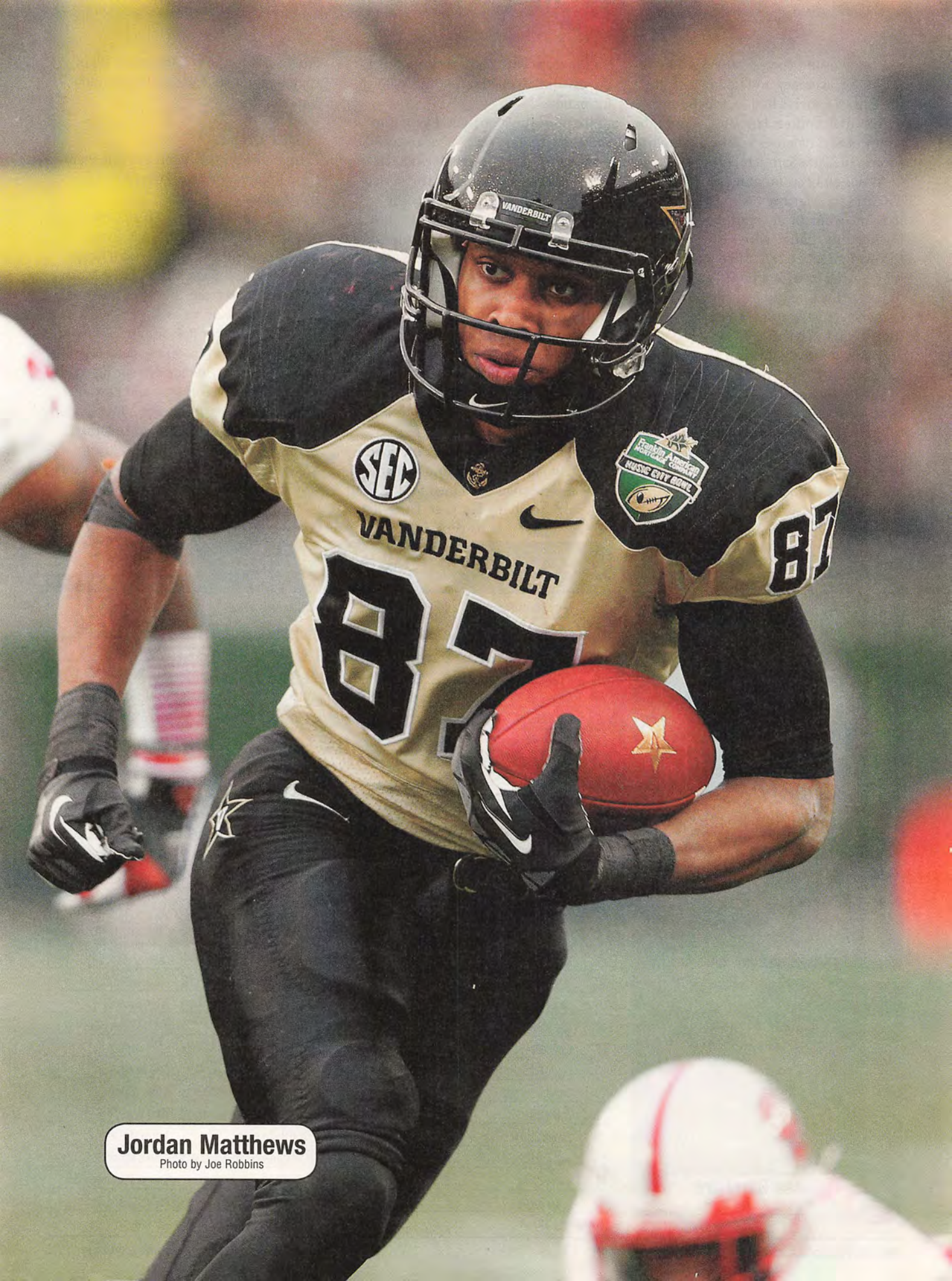
Jordan Rodgers, who completed nearly 60 percent of his passes, and Zac Stacy, the program's all-time rushing leader, both graduated and are pursuing NFL dreams.

Thus, repeating the 2012 squad's 30 points a game — the most by a Vanderbilt team since World War I — will be a tall task.

But the Commodores still have playmakers, mainly receivers Chris Boyd and Jordan Matthews. The big, physical targets were the most productive SEC duo last year with a combined 144 catches for 2,097 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Getting the ball to them falls on Austyn Carta-Samuels.

The former Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year hopes his big arm makes up for his small stature. The senior made just one start last year after throwing for more than 3,600 yards and 19



Jordan Matthews
Photo by Joe Robbins

touchdowns in two years at Wyoming.

Timing, accuracy and taking care of the ball — Rodgers had 15 touchdowns to five interceptions last year — amid the attack of SEC defenses will be vital to the success of Carta-Samuels and the offense.

"It has all been mental," he said.

"After transferring here, I really got to refine some of my stuff mechanically I wanted to change with how I was throwing the ball. I felt like when I got here I came in with a pretty good grasp of where I wanted to be from a mechanics perspective, but it is learning this (pro-style) offense."

Finally getting a crack at the starting job is Wesley Tate, the younger brother of Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Golden Tate.

The senior has patiently waited his turn the past three years, bouncing from running back to slot receiver and back to tailback. He split carries with Brian Kimbrow behind Stacy last year, was second on the team with eight rushing touchdowns and excelled out of the Wildcat formation.

"I'm not the No. 1 yet. I've got to work for it," Tate said. "I've always considered myself an every-down back."

The 6-1, 215-pounder is the perfect blend of size and speed and is the frontrunner for the starting job. But Franklin plans to also utilize sophomore speedsters Kimbrow, who was second behind Stacy with 413 yards, and 5-7 Jerron Seymour, who is returning from an injury.

Four starters return, including senior All-SEC left tackle Wesley Johnson, on a deep offensive line. After having just seven linemen last spring, position coach Herb Hand was able to rotate in big bodies with 13 players.

The biggest question mark on offense is at tight end. Sophomores Kris Kentera and Steven Scheu combined for less than 150 yards receiving last year. Three tight ends arrive in the fall, including highly touted junior college transfer Brandon Vandenburg.

DEFENSE

In a month, the defensive line went from an apparent weakness to a formidable unit.

Three starters — Rob Lohr, Colt Nichter and Johnell Thomas — all graduated and the most experienced returning defensive tackle, Jared Morse, was dismissed from the team due to a violation of team rules.

But coordinator Bob Shoop's ability to rotate in five players on the defensive line last year paid dividends this spring. With top returners Walker May and Barron Dixon limited with injuries, Vince Taylor, Caleb Azubike, Adam Butler, Ladarius Banks, Stephen Weatherly and Jimmy Stewart feasted on the opportunities and tested an experienced offensive line.

"I think we've improved dramatically

Chase Garnham
Photo by Michael Wade

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Austyn Carta-Samuels	Sr.	Wyoming transfer has big arm, but needs to improve on timing.	Patton Robinette, Fr.
RB	Wesley Tate	Sr.	Brother of Seattle Seahawks WR Golden Tate gets his turn.	Jerron Seymour, So.
RB	Brian Kimbrow	So.	Speedy back was second on the team in rushing last year.	Derek King, So.
WR	Jordan Matthews*	Sr.	Talented playmaker on pace to rewrite record books.	Jonathan Krause, Sr.*
WR	Chris Boyd*	Jr.	Second half of SEC's top WR tandem; 13 TDs in two years.	Tip McKenzie, Fr.
TE	Kris Kentera	So.	Converted QB caught two TD passes last year.	Steven Scheu, So.*
LT	Wesley Johnson*	Sr.	Versatile and durable All-SEC lineman has started all 38 games.	Andrew Jelks, Fr.
LG	Chase White	Jr.	Rotated in at guard and tackle last year.	Barrett Gouger, Fr.
C	Joe Townsend*	Jr.	Started last seven games as running game took off.	Spencer Pulley, Jr.
RG	Jake Bernstein*	So.	Showed dependability at both guard positions in last six games.	Will Holden, Fr.
RT	Andrew Bridges*	Jr.	Solid pass blocker working way back after late-season injury.	Blake Fromang, Fr.
PK	Carey Spear*	Sr.	Fearless specialist set school record with 20 field goals.	Colby Cooke, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Walker May*	Sr.	Most experienced lineman was limited in spring.	Caleb Azubike, So.
DT	Vince Taylor	Jr.	Unit's largest lineman has impressed with improved work ethic.	Ladarius Banks, Fr.
DT	Barron Dixon	Jr.	Promising tackle played in all 13 games, but missed spring.	Adam Butler, Fr.
DE	Kyle Woestmann	Jr.	Plays with a constant motor and had six sacks in 2012.	Jimmy Stewart, So.
LB	Karl Butler*	Sr.	Speedy deliverer of jarring hits can also play nickel spot.	Larry Franklin, So.
LB	Chase Garnham*	Sr.	Most experienced LB led team with seven sacks from middle.	Jake Sealand, So.
LB	Darreon Herring	So.	Budding star made 33 tackles, forced two fumbles as freshman.	Kellen Williams, So.
CB	Andre Hal*	Sr.	All-SEC pick with lockdown corner potential, also returns kickoffs.	Paris Head, Fr.
CB	Steven Clarke	Sr.	Has progressed from special teams roles.	Torren McGaster, Fr.
SS	Javon Marshall*	Sr.	Good open-field tackler tied for team lead with 60 solo stops.	Jahmel McIntosh, So.
FS	Kenny Ladler*	Sr.	Physical, fierce competitor led team with 90 stops.	Andrew Williamson, So.
P	Colby Cooke	Fr.	Strong leg, but needs to be more consistent.	Taylor Hudson, So.

*Returning Starter

COMMODORES RECRUITING 2013

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Brandon Vandenburg
No one tight end stood out in VU's offense last year, leaving the door open for Vanderburg to potentially start in 2013. VU believes he could be a viable third-down option with his 4.75 speed in the 40. He can also block well enough to help in the run game.

Jay Woods
The Georgia native was quite productive (216 tackles his last two seasons) even though he was often double-teamed. He has the combination of size and explosiveness to plug into Vanderbilt's defensive line rotation immediately and might be VU's best defensive line recruit in 20 years.

Nigel Bowden
The Georgia native already looked physically ready to play at 230 pounds, and then he added 15 more. Vanderbilt desperately needed linebackers a year ago, and lost one starter to graduation after last season. "The Hammer" may get his shot quickly due to his run-stuffing ability.

THE SLEEPER

Taurean Ferguson
Ferguson was highly productive in high school, starting for four years and picking off 11 passes in his last two. He's athletic — he starred in track, and also played receiver — and he's versatile enough that he could play corner, nickel corner or safety.

Committments	25
Average Stars	3.16
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	5
★★★☆☆	19
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	79
National Rank: 19	SEC: 9

2014 NEEDS: The Commodores hoped to sign at least two running backs last year; not only did they strike out on their top targets, but they added just one player at the position. They'll look to ink two or three for 2014. VU will graduate its starting safeties and will have just four on the roster after the 2013 season, making that a position of need. The Commodores signed six offensive linemen in 2012 but just two last year, so it's time to stock up there again.

— by Chris Lee/VandySports.com/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jalen Banks	DB	5-11	188	✪✪✪	Harvey, IL	Thornton Township
Rated the No. 38 safety and the No. 13 player in Illinois by Rivals... Had 60 tackles, three interceptions, eight pass break-ups and four forced fumbles as a senior... Four-year starter.						
Tre Bell	DB	5-11	170	✪✪✪	Jersey City, NJ	St. Peter-s Prep
Rivals' No. 38 cornerback and 14th-ranked player in New Jersey... Posted two interceptions, 12 pass break-ups and three touchdowns as a senior... Played in the Chesapeake All-Star Game.						
Nigel Bowden	LB	6-1	245	✪✪✪✪	Macon, GA	Central
No. 9 inside linebacker and 17th-best player in Georgia, according to Rivals... Had 117 tackles, 17 stops for loss, four sacks and four forced fumbles as a senior... Team captain and first team AAA All-State as a senior.						
Oren Burks	LB	6-3	200	✪✪✪	Lorton, VA	South County
Rated the No. 50 outside linebacker and the 20th-best player in Virginia by Rivals... District Defensive Player of the Year after collecting 123 tackles, 17 tackles for loss, 3.5 sacks, six forced fumbles and three interceptions in 2012.						
Carlos Burse	WR	6-2	200	✪✪✪	Alpharetta, GA	Alpharetta
Rivals' 53rd-rated wide receiver and No. 34 player in Georgia... Caught 52 passes for 857 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior and had 166 catches, 2,977 yards and 35 scores for his career.						
Delando Crooks	OL	6-5	275	✪✪✪	Atlanta, GA	Carver
No. 64 offensive tackle and 70th-best player in Georgia, according to Rivals... Two-way starter who earned first team AAAA All-State honors after collecting 35 tackles, seven sacks and two forced fumbles as a senior.						
Jordan Cunningham	WR	6-1	175	✪✪✪✪	Fort Lauderdale, FL	University School
Rivals' No. 21 receiver and 27th-best player in Florida, and No. 183 player nationally... Three-year all-county player who caught 53 balls for 817 yards and eight touchdowns as a senior... Selected for Under Armour All-American Game.						
Zach Cunningham	LB	6-4	205	✪✪✪✪	Pinson, AL	Pinson Valley
Rivals' 23rd-rated outside linebacker and 13th-best player in Alabama... Three-year starter who was *Birmingham News'* Lineman of the Year... Had 448 career tackles, with 194 and 41 for loss as a senior, plus four blocked punts.						
Sean Dowling	OL	6-6	270	✪✪✪	Fallbrook, CA	Fallbrook
The No. 49 offensive tackle and 49th-best player in California, according to Rivals... Two-year starter on the offensive line... Played in Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl after his senior season... Has already enrolled at Vanderbilt.						
Taurean Ferguson	DB	5-9	180	✪✪✪	Jonesboro, GA	Jonesboro
Senior captain and four-year starter who also played receiver... Had five interceptions and eight pass break-ups, plus 85 tackles as a senior... Played in International Bowl and Georgia East-West All-Star Game.						
Nathan Marcus	TE	6-5	220	✪✪✪	Glen Ellyn, IL	Glenbard West
Rivals' No. 29 player in Illinois... Three-year starter and two-way player... First team All-State as a senior after a 56-catch, 939-yard, eight-touchdown senior season.						
Johnathon McCrary	QB	6-3	200	✪✪✪✪	Ellenwood, GA	Cedar Grove
Rivals' No. 195 player nationally, as well as the 10th-best dual-threat quarterback... Played in U.S. Army All-American Bowl after completing 75.2 percent of his 270 passes for 2,927 yards, 25 touchdowns and nine interceptions... Enrolled at Vanderbilt, and hit 6 of 13 passes for 108 yards and a score in VU's spring game.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Tommy Openshaw	K	6-2	175	✪✪	St. Johns, FL	Creekside
Three-year starter at kicker, and also punted... Made five field goals and averaged 45.6 yards per punt as a senior... Hit 16 of 22 field goals, including a 56-yarder, as a junior.						
Mitchell Parsons	TE	6-4	245	✪✪✪✪	Parker, CO	Chaparral
Rivals' No. 211 player nationally, No.2 player in Colorado and seventh-ranked tight end... Caught 45 balls for 754 yards and seven touchdowns as a senior.						
Gerald Perry	WR	5-10	165	✪✪✪	Memphis, TN	Whitehaven
Rivals' No. 18 player in Tennessee... Three-year starter who caught 38 passes for 708 yards and 10 scores as a senior, and returned two punts for scores... Played in AutoZone Liberty Bowl All-Star Game... Also ran track.						
Latevius Rayford	WR	6-1	180	✪✪✪	Memphis, TN	Central
The No. 56 receiver nationally and 12th-best player in Tennessee, according to Rivals... Four-year starter and senior captain... Averaged 26.2 yards per catch on 18 receptions for a run-oriented offense as a senior... Played in Semper Fi All-American Game.						
Darrius Sims	DB	5-9	175	✪✪✪	Memphis, TN	Whitehaven
Ranked No. 34 nationally as a cornerback and 10th-best player in Tennessee by Rivals... First-team All-State as a senior; had 68 tackles, four interceptions and 13 pass break-ups... Had two interceptions in AutoZone Liberty Bowl All-Star Game.						
Landon Stokes	DE	6-4	220	✪✪✪	Orlando, FL	Lake Highland
Rated No. 36 weakside defensive end by Rivals... Started at defensive end/linebacker and wide receiver/tight end as a senior, and had 54 tackles, eight sacks, 15 catches and 264 yards.						
Brandon Vandenburg	TE	6-5	255	✪✪✪	Palm Desert, CA	College of the Desert
Rivals' No. 60 JUCO player... Team MVP who had 24 catches for 353 yards and three scores in 2012... Played one year at the University of San Diego.						
Mack Weaver	TE	6-5	248	✪✪✪	Memphis, TN	Harding Academy
The No. 23 tight end nationally and 13th-best player in Tennessee, according to Rivals... Three-year starter who had 66 tackles, 8.5 sacks and 13 tackles for loss as a senior... Played in Offense-Defense All-American Game.						
Ralph Webb	RB	5-10	190	✪✪✪	Gainesville, FL	Gainesville
Ran for 2,020 yards and 28 scores and was first team 6-A All-State... Rushed for 917 yards and eight touchdowns as a junior... State 6-A long jump champion with a personal best of 23'5".						
Ryan White	DB	5-10	178	✪✪✪	Louisville, KY	Trinity
Rivals' No. 40 cornerback and fourth-best player in Kentucky... All-state as a senior after picking off three passes, collecting 44 tackles and 10 passes defended for USA *Today's* No. 16 team nationally.						
DeAndre Woods	WR	6-3	208	✪✪✪	Pinson, AL	Clay
Ranked by Rivals as the 62nd-best wide receiver and No. 19 player in Alabama... First-team 6A All-State as a senior after catching 51 passes for 733 yards... Three-year starter who also ran track.						
Jay Woods	DT	6-2	280	✪✪✪	Jackson, GA	Jackson
Rivals' No. 31 defensive tackle and 41st-best player in Georgia... Had 117 tackles, 22 stops for loss, six sacks and three forced fumbles as a senior... Selected for Offense-Defense All-American Game.						
Jonathan Wynn	DE	6-4	220	✪✪✪	Stone Mountain, GA	Stephenson
Rivals' 35th-ranked weakside defensive and and No. 55 player in Georgia... Had 87 total tackles with 19 for loss and 11 sacks as a senior... Also lettered twice in track and field.						

COMMODORES SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
94	Torey Agee	DT	6-4	265	Fr.	Opelika, AL
43	Scot Aiello	S	5-10	178	Jr.	Franklin
88	Erik Allen	WR	5-11	180	So.	Charlottesville, VA
47	Tyler Anders	RB	5-11	192	Jr.	Richlands, VA
55	Caleb Azubike	DE	6-4	258	So.	Nashville
2	Brandon Banks	DB	5-10	165	Fr.	Brandywine, MD
93	Ladarius Banks	DT	6-2	290	Fr.	Dallas, GA
10	Cory Batey	S	6-0	205	Fr.	Nashville
53	Jake Bernstein	OL	6-4	295	So.	Lake in the Hills, IL
51	Hunter Bowman	LB	5-11	216	Jr.	Savannah, GA
80	Chris Boyd	WR	6-4	205	Jr.	Roswell, GA
52	Andrew Bridges	OL	6-6	275	Jr.	Atlanta, GA
79	Ryan Brockway	OL	6-5	290	Sr.	Los Angeles, CA
56	Darien Bryant	DE	6-4	225	So.	Reynoldsburg, OH
69	Adam Butler	DT	6-4	290	Fr.	Duncanville, TX
28	Karl Butler	LB	6-1	215	Sr.	New Orleans, LA
6	Austyn Carta-Samuels	QB	6-1	220	Sr.	San Jose, CA
12	Steven Clarke	DB	5-10	195	Sr.	Lauderdale Lakes, FL
35	Hasan Clayton	RB	5-11	180	Sr.	Arlington Heights, IL
16	Colby Cooke	P	6-3	200	Fr.	Goochland, VA
44	Barron Dixon	DT	6-4	302	Jr.	Alpharetta, GA
72	Sean Dowling	OL	6-6	275	Fr.	Fallbrook, CA
34	Andrew East	SN	6-2	230	Jr.	Indianpolis, IN
30	Larry Franklin	LB	6-1	210	So.	Vero Beach, FL
29	Will Fritz	RB	5-6	170	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
66	Blake Fromang	OL	6-7	285	Fr.	Orlando, FL
36	Chase Garnham	LB	6-3	234	Sr.	Fairhope, AL
56	Barrett Gouger	OL	6-4	285	Fr.	Soddy-Daisy
47	Blake Gowder	FB	6-2	228	Jr.	Blairsville, GA
7	Josh Grady	QB	6-0	188	So.	Tampa, FL
81	Alex Grecco	WR	5-10	175	So.	East Greenwich, RI
49	Josh Gregory	DB	5-11	170	Jr.	Goodlettsville
23	Andre Hal	DB	6-0	184	Sr.	Port Allen, LA
11	Harding Harper	LB	6-2	230	Fr.	Montgomery, AL
21	Paris Head	DB	6-0	175	Fr.	Lawrenceville, GA
35	Darreon Herring	LB	6-2	220	So.	Stone Mountain, GA
45	Joseph Hoffman	FB	5-11	195	So.	Scarsdale, NY
74	Will Holden	OL	6-6	290	Fr.	Green Cove Springs, FL
29	Taylor Hudson	P	6-3	210	So.	Powell, OH
22	Casey Hughes	LB	5-10	210	Jr.	Redding, PA
38	Alex Hysong	DB	5-10	175	Jr.	Bethesda, MD
50	Andrew Jelks	OL	6-6	275	Fr.	Paris
67	Wesley Johnson	OL	6-5	285	Sr.	Nashville
82	Kris Kentera	TE	6-4	230	So.	Colorado Springs, CO
25	Brian Kimbrow	RB	5-8	180	So.	Memphis
33	Derek King	RB	5-11	196	So.	Nashville
19	Jacquese Kirk	DB	6-0	175	So.	Jasper, AL
17	Jonathan Krause	WR	5-11	182	Sr.	Snellville, GA
1	Kenny Ladler	S	6-0	205	Sr.	Stone Mountain, GA
38	Fitz Lassing	FB/TE	6-3	240	Sr.	Nashville
31	Javon Marshall	S	5-10	195	Sr.	Huber Heights, OH
41	Chris Martin	FB	5-10	185	So.	Princeton, NJ
87	Jordan Matthews	WR	6-3	205	Sr.	Madison, AL
90	Walker May	DE	6-5	250	Sr.	Birmingham, AL
78	Kevin McCoy	OL	6-5	285	Fr.	Tampa, FL
2	Johnny McCrary	QB	6-4	212	Fr.	Decatur, GA
5	Torren McGaster	DB	6-0	185	Fr.	Daphne, AL
27	Jahmel McIntosh	S	6-1	200	So.	Cleveland, MS
8	Tip McKenzie	WR	5-8	175	Fr.	Natchez, MS
61	Connor Morrison	SN	6-0	230	So.	Edmond, OK
94	Xavier Morse	PK	5-10	180	Jr.	Cambridge, MA
9	Trent Pruitt	WR	5-9	170	Jr.	Fitzgerald, GA
77	Spencer Pulley	OL	6-4	290	Jr.	Germantown
4	Patton Robinette	QB	6-4	204	Fr.	Maryville
81	Steven Scheu	TE	6-5	255	So.	Evansville, IN
13	Jake Sealand	LB	6-2	220	So.	Tucker, GA
3	Jerron Seymour	RB	5-7	190	So.	Hialeah, FL
39	Carey Spear	PK	5-10	190	Sr.	Mayfield Village, OH
54	Jimmy Stewart	DE	6-4	240	So.	Cape Coral, FL
39	Dane Stubbs	DB	5-10	175	So.	Covington, LA
18	Patrick Sutton	LB	6-0	210	Sr.	Charleston, SC
24	Wesley Tate	RB	6-1	215	Sr.	Hendersonville
53	Vince Taylor	DT	6-2	312	Jr.	Hattiesburg, MS
40	Ja'karri Thomas	LB	6-1	212	Fr.	Tallahassee, FL
57	Joe Townsend	OL	6-4	305	Jr.	Hendersonville
98	Will Trepp	DL	5-11	250	So.	Greenwich, CT
89	Dillon van der Wal	TE	6-6	255	Jr.	Woodland Hills, CA
45	Stephen Weatherly	DE	6-5	235	Fr.	Snellville, GA
73	Chase White	OL	6-5	290	Jr.	Plano, TX
85	Trey Wilkins	WR	5-11	195	Jr.	Cordova
42	Kellen Williams	LB	6-1	220	So.	Winter Haven, FL
32	Andrew Williamson	S	6-1	205	So.	San Antonio, TX
92	Kyle Woestmann	DE	6-3	255	Jr.	Marietta, GA

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Rodgers	12	139.1	191	319	5	59.9	2539	15	78	211.6
A Carta-Samuels	6	139.1	14	25	0	56.0	208	1	38	34.7

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Matthews	13	94	1323	14.1	8	78	101.8
C. Boyd	13	50	774	15.5	5	60	59.5
W. Tate	13	12	116	9.7	1	25	8.9

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Z. Stacy	13	207	1198	57	1141	5.5	10	90	87.8
B. Kimbrow	13	66	432	19	413	6.3	3	74	31.8
W. Tate	13	107	419	43	376	3.5	8	25	28.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: K. Ladler 90, C. Garnham 84, J. Marshall 83
Tackles for loss: C. Garnham 12.5, K. Butler 11.5, R. Lohr 11
Sacks: C. Garnham 7, K. Woestmann 6, C. Azubike 4
Interceptions: T. Wilson 3, K. Ladler 2, A. Hal 2

NOTEBOOK

Former SEC Freshman of the Year **Warren Norman's** career ended quietly just days before spring practice began.

Norman decided not to return for a fifth year due to thinning cartilage in his knees. The running back underwent multiple surgeries and sat out the 2011 season, but the pain persisted.

In 2009, he was named the league's top freshman after setting SEC freshman records for all-purpose yards and kickoff return yards. He plans to remain at practices and games before graduating with his sociology degree in December.

"He is a guy who has handled adversity at his age as well as anybody I've ever seen," coach **James Franklin** said. "This is a guy that gets the big picture and that's why we're so proud of him."

• Four days before his first spring game, quarterback **Johnny McCrary's** father, former Atlanta Falcons tight end Gregory McCrary, died from a heart attack. The 18-year-old freshman is parent-less as he lost his mother when he was 9, Franklin said.

McCrary, a four-star prospect who enrolled in January, played admirably in the spring game, throwing for 108 yards and a 40-yard touchdown.

"To see him come back that quickly and carry himself the way he does, it is emotional for me," senior quarterback **Austyn Carta-Samuels** said. "He always says, 'Austyn, I look up to you.' I'm like, 'No dude, I look up to you.'"

• In an effort to embrace Vanderbilt's past, Franklin has extended a hand to former Commodores.

Former coach Bobby Johnson, who retired weeks before the 2010 season, spoke to the team before one spring practice, as did former NFL All-Pro offensive lineman Will Wolford.

• A roof is up and soon the Commodores will be able to practice indoors. A $30 million indoor multi-use facility, which will also include a 300-meter track and four bowling lanes, is expected to be available for use for the football team by Halloween.

• Vanderbilt is the only school in the SEC without any turnover on the coaching staff. All nine assistants were retained. Extra compensation for assistants was included in Franklin's new contract — his second in as many years — last December.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On coach James Franklin:** "That guy is doing a great job. I saw them early against South Carolina and they got better and better every week. ... I'm impressed with the way they coach and the way they play. They get the max out of their players and they recruit well. That guy has done a great job over there. I think his team is obviously in the bottom half of the league talent-wise. How far, I don't know, but they're well coached and play hard as hell."

• **On the offense:** "I thought Vanderbilt's quarterback (Jordan Rodgers) was OK. He didn't get them beat and he made some plays. The guy they'll really miss is their tailback, Zac Stacy. He was really good and bailed them out of a lot of situations in the Wildcat and short yardage."

Caleb Azubike
Photo by Michael Wade

on the defensive line," Franklin said. "I think we'll be fine."

Vanderbilt returns six starters from a defense that ranked 15th in the country by allowing just 18.7 points a game.

In the middle, the Commodores return two starting linebackers.

Chase Garnham developed in the middle linebacker role nicely after the departure of Chris Marve. Garnham led the team with seven sacks, in addition to 84 tackles. On the outside, Karl Butler blossomed in moving over from safety with 11.5 tackles for loss, second to Garnham. Darreon Herring showed immense promise as a freshman reserve with an interception and two forced fumbles.

The biggest thorn in the side for the linebackers and defense was stopping the run, especially mobile quarterbacks. South Carolina's Connor Shaw, Florida's Jeff Driskel and Northwestern's Kain Colter all gave the Commodores fits with the read option.

The secondary appears to be the strongest and most experienced group.

The Commodores were third in the SEC and 14th in the nation, allowing just 191.8 passing yards a game.

Shutdown cornerback Andre Hal, who had two interceptions and 14 pass breakups, is back with senior Steven Clarke expected to start opposite him.

Senior Kenny Ladler led the team with 90 tackles last year. The All-SEC free safety also had two interceptions and is half of a hard-hitting pair. Joining him is strong safety Javon Marshall, who tied Ladler for the team-high in solo tackles (60). But Shoop wants to build on the depth by bringing Cory Batey over from wide receiver and rotating in Jahmel McIntosh and Andrew Williamson.

"I thought Kenny's improvement from 2011 to 2012 was superb," Shoop said.

"But we need to find some depth behind them. Andrew Williamson is a young player we have high hopes for and he had a great winter. Then to move Cory Batey over, that is what the safeties in the SEC look like — over 6-foot, 205-210 pounds. They can run; they have tremendous ball skills; they'll hit you."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Dubbed as "We-fense," Vanderbilt special teams hope to build off a stellar 2012 campaign.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

WR Jordan Matthews

Electrifying playmaker who turned down the NFL Draft to return for his senior season. ... The All-SEC first-team pick led the league with 94 catches and set a school record with 1,323 receiving yards. ... Coach James Franklin said that the scary thing is that Matthews can improve, especially with route running. ... With 2,290 yards and 17 touchdowns already, he's on pace to become the program's all-time leader in receiving yards and touchdowns. ... Matthews said the main reason he returned was to lead the Commodores to an SEC championship.

EMERGING STAR

DE Caleb Azubike

Nicknamed the "Nigerian Nightmare," he burst onto the scene as a freshman. ... He played more snaps than any Vanderbilt first-year player and set the freshman record with four sacks. ... Contributed 21 tackles as a reserve and recovered two fumbles, including one in Music City Bowl victory. ... At 6-4, 255 pounds, he is extremely versatile and athletic and played some defensive tackle in the spring. ... Nashville product was one of Franklin's first commitments for the 2012 class.

TOP NEWCOMER

TE Brandon Vandenburg

Lone junior college transfer should bolster thin tight ends corps. ... Big, physical target (6-5, 255) was ranked the No. 2 junior college TE by Rivals.com. ... Spent one year at San Diego before transferring to College of the Desert near Palm Springs, Calif. ... Named team MVP after making 24 catches for 353 yards and three touchdowns. ... Quick for his size and will add depth to offensive line as a blocker.

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	16.9	112
Rushing	138.8	80
Passing	159.4	105
Total	298.3	110
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	31.2	94
Rushing	193.0	100
Passing	226.3	75
Total	419.3	93
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.33	79

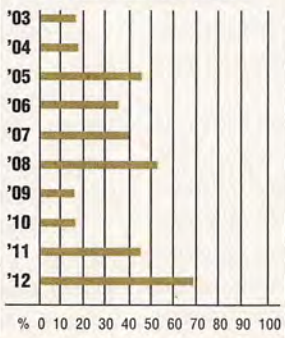
2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.7	61
Rushing	164.5	47
Passing	174.6	97
Total	339.1	98
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.6	29
Rushing	130.5	36
Passing	192.2	18
Total	322.8	18
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	49

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.0	55
Rushing	166.3	57
Passing	213.4	80
Total	379.7	80
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.7	15
Rushing	142.2	38
Passing	191.7	14
Total	333.9	19
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
0	+ 0.00	58

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

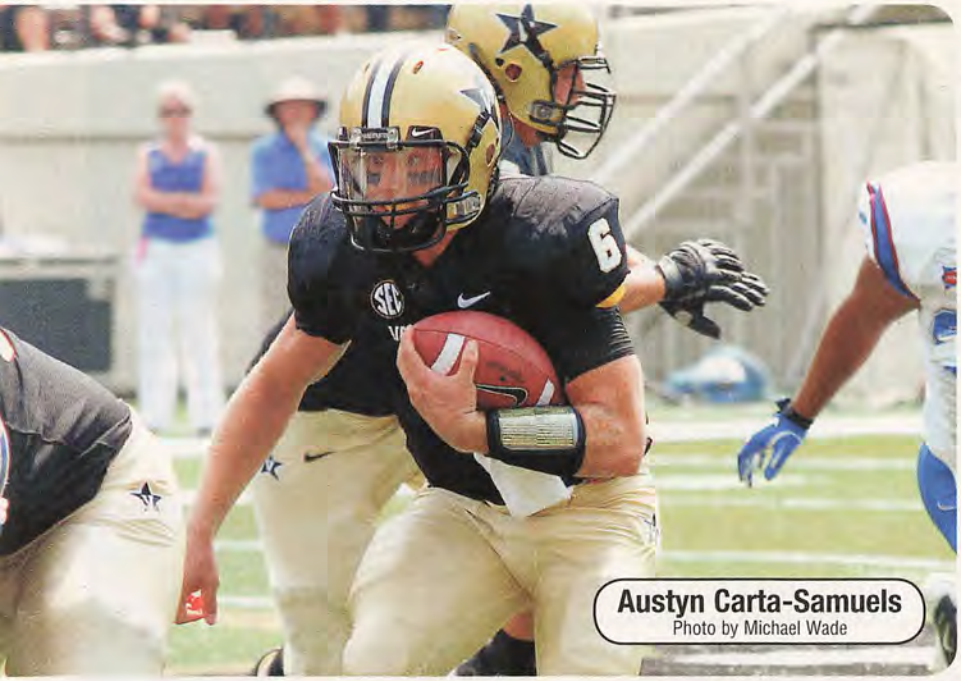


RESULTS

9-4, 5-3

L	SOUTH CAROLINA	13-17
L	at Northwestern	13-23
W	PRESBYTERIAN	58-0
L	at Georgia	3-48
W	at Missouri	19-15
L	FLORIDA	17-31
W	AUBURN	17-13
W	MASSACHUSETTS	49-7
W	at Kentucky	40-0
W	at Ole Miss	27-26
W	TENNESSEE	41-18
W	at Wake Forest	55-21
	Music City Bowl	
W	vs. NC State	38-24

PLAYER PROFILE



Austyn Carta-Samuels
Photo by Michael Wade

Leading Vandy is No Short Order

Austyn Carta-Samuels isn't afraid to admit his insecurities.

He just won't let his 6-1 frame define him.

"I've always put orthotics in my shoes and tried to make myself half an inch taller," he said. "It is always something I've been insecure about just because I feel from a talent perspective and mentally I can compete with any quarterback in the country."

The senior will get the opportunity to prove himself as he heads into preseason camp as the favorite to be Vanderbilt's starting quarterback.

The Wyoming transfer started just one game last year behind Jordan Rodgers, who graduated last December. But he used that time to enhance his skills and take notes on how Rodgers, a junior college transfer, prepared himself for life in the SEC.

"I learned a lot from Jordan and the way he applied himself and the way he worked," said Carta-Samuels, whose younger brother Kyle is a quarterback commit for Vanderbilt's 2014 class.

"I've always been able to rely on my natural athletic ability most of the time. I kind of winged it. For these past six months, I've really worked hard upstairs (watching film) like Jordan did. I think I'm starting to see some of those things come to fruition and that is exciting for me."

His arm strength and accuracy give him the edge over redshirt freshman Patton Robinette. He'll need to improve his timing with his receivers and be quicker at releasing the ball, coach James Franklin said after Carta-Samuels took three sacks in the spring game.

"I thought he was holding onto the ball a little long," Franklin said. "You've got to get rid of the ball. You can't take sacks."

The quickness of SEC defensive ends will be much different from what Carta-Samuels saw in the Mountain West Conference, where he was named Freshman of the Year in 2009.

In two years at Wyoming, he threw for more than 3,600 yards and 19 touchdowns, but departed the program after the 2010 season when his position coach left for another job.

The San Jose, Calif., native had offers from Arizona and Colorado, but longed to go to Vanderbilt, where his grandfather played baseball. After taking 22 credit hours at a community college, he was accepted into Vanderbilt in the fall of 2011 and cried when he got the news.

"All my dreams have been accomplished and I still have more to go," he said. "But I'm right where I want to be. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the world. This is special for me."

Senior Carey Spear returns after making a school-record 20 field goals out of 24 attempts, in addition to some jarring tackles.

Krause is back after he became the first Commodore to return two punts for touchdowns in a season since 1968.

The biggest question mark lies at punter. Richard Kent is gone after ranking 10th nationally with 44.9 yards per punt. Walk-on Taylor Hudson improved during the spring and redshirt freshman Colby Cooke was a *Parade* All-American as a kicker in high school.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Knowing the role scheduling plays in building a program, Franklin ditched deals with Big Ten foes Ohio State and Northwestern. Instead, the non-conference slate features FCS foe Austin Peay, Massachusetts, UAB and Wake Forest — teams that combined for a 10-36 record last year.

The season opens at home against rejuvenated Ole Miss on a Thursday, college football's opening night, for the second straight year. Vanderbilt rallied from a 17-point deficit in the second half to edge the Rebels last year.

The biggest road tests will be at South Carolina, Texas A&M and Florida. In-state rival Tennessee is out for revenge in Knoxville after an embarrassing 41-18 loss. The Commodores will be looking to avenge an ugly 48-3 loss of their own — the worst in Franklin's two years — when Georgia comes to Nashville on Oct. 19.

— Jerome Boettcher

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'12 Record
Aug. 29	OLE MISS	7-6
Sept. 7	AUSTIN PEAY	2-9
Sept. 14	at South Carolina	11-2
Sept. 21	at Massachusetts	1-11
Sept. 28	UAB	3-9
Oct. 5	MISSOURI	5-7
Oct. 19	GEORGIA	12-2
Oct. 26	at Texas A&M	11-2
Nov. 9	at Florida	11-2
Nov. 16	KENTUCKY	2-10
Nov. 23	at Tennessee	5-7
Nov. 30	WAKE FOREST	5-7

FLORIDA ATLANTIC | OWLS

C-USA: 11 Record: 3-9 Sun Belt record: 2-6 (T-8th) Stadium: FAU Stadium (29,419)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Daniel Shirey-USA TODAY Sports

"Everyone has gotten a lot stronger, a lot faster, and everything has gone well."

— QB Stephen Curtis

OWLS at a GLANCE

COACH: Carl Pelini — At FAU and overall: 3-9, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian Wright
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Pete Rekstis

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2007
LAST BOWL: 2008, Motor City
RETURNING STARTERS: 14; 6 offense, 6 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Jonathan Wallace, WR William Dukes, WR Daniel McKinney, TE Nexon Dorvilus, DE Cory Henry, LB Adarius Glanton, CB Keith Reaser

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The offense should be much more comfortable after a year in the spread. Wallace finished the 2012 season strong after recovering from hamstring problems, and Dukes is a playmaker at wideout. Glanton was a pleasant surprise last year, and Reaser is a quality defensive back.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Owls are looking for three new starters along the offensive line, and pass protection was an issue in the spring. The defense has a long way to go. The Owls gave up over 400 yards a game in total offense a year ago.

OFFENSE

A year's experience in a spread scheme should produce even more improvement in 2013.

Abandoning the pro set favored by Howard Schnellenberger, the Owls under coach Carl Pelini increased their overall production to 350.6 yards per game last year from the 248.8 average in 2011.

The biggest jump came in the passing game, where they averaged 237.6 yards per outing, an increase of 80 yards a game.

The top pass catchers from last year — William Dukes (63 receptions, 979 yards), Daniel McKinney (48-497), and Nexon Dorvilus (30-301) — all return, as does leading rusher Jonathan Wallace.

Wallace, slowed by hamstring problems in the early going, rushed for 673 yards last season, including 479 in the last six games.

The Owls will have a new starter at quarterback. Melvin German III seemed to have the edge over junior college transfer Jaquez Johnson and junior Stephen Curtis after spring, but Pelini wasn't ready to anoint him the certain starter. Curtis started last year's opener before giving way to Graham Wilbert but made only brief appearances after that.

The Owls also are looking for three new starters up front with seniors DeAndre Williams and Mustafa Johnson the only returnees.

DEFENSE

The Owls took a slight step backward in their defensive numbers for 2012, with the bulk of the problem coming from issues trying to stop the run. They allowed foes to rush for 202.1 yards per game.

The Owls lose their top two tacklers, Brent Harstad (103 tackles) and David Hinds (80), but return the next three-best tacklers from last season — linebackers Adarius Glanton and Andrae Kirk and safety Jeremy McKnight. Cory Henry also is a three-year starter at end.

Including McKnight, who had five starts but missed three games to injury, the Owls return seven starters plus several others with starting experience.

That includes senior Randell Johnson, who started 12 games in 2011 but played only 10 games (two starts) because of injuries last year. He gives the Owls a third experienced linebacker.

The secondary looks particularly strong with three starters, topped by senior corner Keith Reaser. Reaser and tackle Trevon Coley are the only two returnees on defense who started all 12 games last year.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Mitch Anderson is back to handle field goals after taking over the job in the second half of the season. He made only half his 14 attempts but did hit a 53-yarder.

Sean Kelly averaged 39.9 yards on 69 punts as a freshman last year. He got 16 inside the opponent's 20-yard line with only six touchbacks.

OVERVIEW

The Owls took some steps back to respectability in 2012. They look to continue that progress, but a schedule that puts them on the road for their first three games and five of their first six may put them in a hole that will be hard to dig out of.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Jaquez Johnson: A transfer from East Mississippi Community College with three years of eligibility left, Johnson at times seemed to be leading the three-way quarterback race in the spring. Johnson, who received honorable mention All-America honors at East Mississippi, is a running and passing threat.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	7	Melvin German III	6-2	210	Sr.
RB	**27**	**Jonathan Wallace***	**6-1**	**210**	**Sr.**
WR	**8**	**Daniel McKinney***	**6-0**	**205**	**Sr.**
WR	**19**	**William Dukes***	**6-4**	**190**	**Jr.**
WR	88	Jenson Stoshak	6-1	176	So.
TE	**9**	**Nexon Dorvilus***	**6-4**	**230**	**Sr.**
LT	**63**	**DeAndre Williams***	**6-5**	**290**	**Sr.**
LG	74	Stern Vile	6-5	335	Sr.
C	**58**	**Mustafa Johnson***	**6-3**	**295**	**Jr.**
RG	73	Mike Marsaille	6-5	300	So.
RT	51	Braden Lyons	6-5	295	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	94	Andrew Stryffeler	6-5	260	Sr.
DT	95	Kayvon Sherrill	6-3	279	Sr.
DT	**48**	**Trevon Coley***	**6-2**	**225**	**So.**
DE	**31**	**Cory Henry***	**6-3**	**238**	**Sr.**
LB	**4**	**Adarius Glanton***	**6-1**	**215**	**Sr.**
LB	45	Andrae Kirk	6-2	225	Jr.
LB	15	Randell Johnson	6-4	230	Sr.
CB	**3**	**Keith Reaser***	**6-0**	**190**	**Sr.**
CB	**21**	**D'Joun Smith***	**5-11**	**175**	**Jr.**
SS	23	Winfred Strickland	6-0	185	Sr.
FS	**26**	**Jeremy McKnight***	**5-10**	**180**	**Sr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**42**	**Mitch Anderson***	**5-11**	**186**	**Sr.**
P	**16**	**Sean Kelly***	**5-10**	**186**	**So.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	at Miami
Sept. 5	at East Carolina
Sept. 14	at South Florida
Sept. 21	MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Sept. 28	at Rice
Oct. 5	at UAB
Oct. 12	MARSHALL
Oct. 26	at Auburn
Nov. 2	TULANE
Nov. 16	at Southern Miss
Nov. 23	NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 29	FIU

2012 RESULTS

W	WAGNER	7-3
L	at Middle Tennessee	17-31
L	at Georgia	20-56
L	at Alabama	7-40
L	NORTH TEXAS	14-20
L	at ULM	14-35
L	at South Alabama (2OT)	34-37
W	TROY	34-27
L	at Navy	17-24
W	at Western Kentucky	37-28
L	FIU	25-35
L	LOUISIANA	21-35

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.5	105
Rushing	113.1	107
Passing	237.6	60
Total	350.7	98

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.8	84
Rushing	202.1	102
Passing	204.0	27
Total	406.1	70

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
- 2	- 0.17	73

Old Guard Not Likely to Relinquish C-USA Title to Newcomers

Four schools — Central Florida, Houston, Memphis and Southern Methodist — departed for the league formerly known as the Big East and redubbed the American Athletic Conference.

Three more — East Carolina, Tulane and Tulsa — are in their final season of C-USA competition before joining the AAC in 2014-15.

In response, six schools were added to the league's football ranks this season, giving the conference a robust roster of 14 teams. C-USA plucked a quartet from the Sun Belt — Florida Atlantic, Florida International, Middle Tennessee State and North Texas — and Louisiana Tech and Texas-San Antonio from the Western Athletic Conference.

Three more programs — Old Dominion, Western Kentucky and Charlotte — wait in the wings to join the C-USA football ranks.

While change has been constant for C-USA since its inception in 1996, 2013 should see two old guard teams meeting Dec. 7 for the league title.

In the East Division, East Carolina and Marshall return arguably the top two quarterbacks in the league in Shane Carden and Rakeem Cato, respectively.

Carden threw for 3,116 yards and 23 TDs.

Cato, the 2012 C-USA MVP, helmed one of the nation's most productive attacks, throwing for 4,201 yards and a whopping 37 TDs.

Right in the thick of the west race with ECU and Marshall will be a Middle Tennessee squad that returns plenty of starters, including senior quarterback Logan Kilgore and sophomore running back Jordan Parker.

In the West, defending champion Tulsa lost eight starters from the league's best defense, but seems to reload rather than rebuild.

Third-year coach Bill Blakenship should field another potent offense, led by a dynamic duo at running back in seniors Trey Watts and Ja'Terian Douglas, who combined for 2,044 yards in 2012.

Rice returns 19 starters from a bowl-winning team. Quarterback Taylor McHargue had 12 passing TDs and 11 more on the ground last season.

— Tim Doherty

Conference USA Picks

EAST	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. East Carolina	Talent on each side of ball, including three of the league's top offensive playmakers.	Games against MTSU and Marshall on the road, plus Pirates cross with Tulsa.	ECU bids adieu to C-USA by taking East crown in close race.
2. Middle Tenn.	Seventeen starters return with QB Logan Kilgore and RB Jordan Parker leading the way.	Tough road games at North Carolina and BYU in four-game stretch.	The Blue Raiders will challenge for the division in their first year in the league.
3. Marshall	With Rakeem Cato at the controls, the league has no more potent offense.	Defense has to prove it can stop folks, and the Herd has to clean up its penalties.	Offense will keep Marshall in every game; defense has to step up and win them.
4. UAB	An offense than topped 5,000 yards and averaged 28.2 points returns eight starters.	Tough schedule, with LSU, Vanderbilt, Marshall and East Carolina all on the road.	Like so many C-USA teams, Blazers have to play better defense to take a step forward.
5. Southern Miss	First-year coach Todd Monken has re-invigorated a proud program that went 0-12 in 2012.	Inexperienced QBs will play behind a rebuilt offensive line.	Golden Eagles will be better, but not good enough to challenge this year.
6. Florida Atl.	A second flock of Owls fly into C-USA with 15 starters, including eight on defense.	QB Graham Wilbert's 2,819 yards and 18 TDs are gone.	Second-year coach Carl Pelini's crew will have to rely on defense in inaugural C-USA season.
7. Florida Int.	Starting QB Jake Medlock, RB Kedrick Rhodes return.	Few others do. No other C-USA team lost as many starters as FIU from 2012.	Medlock and Rhodes are capable, but there are too many holes to fill in a single season.
WEST			
1. Tulsa	Best 1-2 punch in the league in RBs Trey Watts and Ja'Terian Douglas.	Only 3 defensive starters — LBs Shawn Jackson and Trent Martin and S Marco Nelson — return.	Rebuilding or not, there's a reason Tulsa has won 10 games in four of last six seasons.
2. Rice	The Owls return 19 starters from bowl team, including 10 of 11 on defense.	Key game with Tulsa on the road in otherwise favorable league slate.	If Tulsa struggles defensively, the Owls could win the West.
3. UTEP	2012's brutal non-conference gauntlet eases considerably.	First-year coach Sean Kugler has to replace eight defensive starters.	Ground game good enough to control clock, but can defense keep opponents close?
4. Louisiana Tech	New coach Skip Holtz familiar with C-USA; Kenneth Dixon as talented as any RB in league.	Only FIU has fewer returning starters (seven) among C-USA teams.	Rough start in new neighborhood likely for Bulldogs.
5. North Texas	RBs Brandin Byrd and Antoinne Jimmerson combined for more than 1,400 yards rushing.	Tough C-USA road games at Tulsa, USM, Louisiana Tech, Tulane.	Looks like they could be a darkhorse in West race.
6. Tulane	Playmakers return on both sides of the ball, and non-conference schedule is palatable.	Offense averaged just more than 300 yards; defense allowed nearly 500 per game.	Young team still growing, but future should be brighter.
7. Texas - San Antonio	Roadrunners return 18 starters; PR Kenny Harrison ranked second nationally.	UTSA entering just third season of football at any level.	Growing pains to come as program steps up the ladder.

Lindy's 2013 ALL C-USA Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM

QB	Rakeem Cato	Jr.	Marshall
RB	Kenneth Dixon	So.	Louisiana Tech
RB	Trey Watts	Sr.	Tulsa
WR	Justin Hardy	Jr.	East Carolina
WR	Ryan Grant	Sr.	Tulane
TE	Gator Hoskins	Sr.	Marshall
OL	Nate Richards	Sr.	Rice
OL	Will Simmons	Sr.	East Carolina
OL	Jake Alexander	Jr.	Tulsa
OL	Darius Johnson	So.	Middle Tennessee
OL	Adhem Elsawi	Sr.	East Carolina
AP	D.J. Banks	Sr.	Louisiana Tech
PK	Cairo Santos	Sr.	Tulane

DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM

DL	Justin Ellis	Sr.	Louisiana Tech
DL	Khryi Thornton	Sr.	Southern Miss
DL	Lee Pegues	Sr.	East Carolina
DL	Alex Bazzie	Sr.	Marshall
LB	Derrell Johnson	Sr.	East Carolina
LB	Shawn Jackson	Sr.	Tulsa
LB	Jeremy Grove	Jr.	East Carolina
DB	Phillip Gaines	Sr.	Rice
DB	Kevin Byard	So.	Middle Tennessee
DB	Darion Monroe	So.	Tulane
DB	Marco Nelson	Sr.	Tulsa
P	Hunter Mullins	Jr.	UAB

OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM

QB	Shane Carden	Jr.	East Carolina
RB	Darrin Reaves	Jr	UAB
RB	Vintavious Cooper	Sr.	East Carolina
WR	Tommy Shuler	Jr.	Marshall
WR	Jordan Leslie	Jr.	UTEP
TE	Justin Jones	Sr.	East Carolina
OL	Jon Hodde	Sr.	Rice
OL	Josh Walker	Sr.	Middle Tennessee
OL	Scott Inskeep	Jr.	Texas-San Antonio
OL	Stetson Burnett	Sr.	Tulsa
OL	Jordan Jeffries	Sr.	Marshall
AP	Kevin Grooms	So.	Marshall
PK	Chris Boswell	Sr.	Rice

DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM

DL	Greg Hickman	Sr.	FIU
DL	Shakeil Lucas	Sr.	Louisiana Tech
DL	Jimmy Staten	Sr.	Middle Tennessee
DL	Marcus Bagley	Sr.	UTEP
LB	Zach Orr	Sr.	North Texas
LB	Jermaine Holmes	Jr.	Marshall
LB	Andrae Kirk	Jr.	Florida Atlantic
DB	Deron Wilson	Sr.	Southern Miss
DB	Sam Miller	Sr.	FIU
DB	D.J. Hunter	So.	Marshall
DB	Damon Magazu	Sr.	East Carolina
P	Tyler Williams	So.	Marshall

THE BIG ONES

Sept. 5	Florida Atlantic at East Carolina
Sept. 12	Tulane at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 21	Middle Tennessee at Florida Atlantic
Sept. 21	Texas-San Antonio at UTEP
Sept. 21	Houston vs. Rice (Reliant Stadium)
Sept. 26	Iowa State at Tulsa
Oct. 5	North Texas at Tulane
Oct. 5	Rice at Tulsa
Oct. 5	East Carolina at Middle Tennessee
Oct. 5	Florida International at Southern Miss
Oct. 24	Marshall at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 2	UTEP at Texas A&M
Nov. 14	Marshall at Tulsa
Nov. 29	Florida International at Florida Atlantic
Nov. 30	East Carolina at Marshall

BOWL CONNECTIONS

Champion
AutoZone Liberty Bowl vs. SEC

C-USA #1
AutoZone Liberty Bowl vs. SEC/American Athletic

C-USA #2
Beef O'Brady's Bowl vs. American Athletic

C-USA #3
Heart of Dallas Bowl vs. Big Ten

C-USA #4
R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl vs. Sun Belt

C-USA #5
Sheraton Hawaii Bowl vs. Mountain West

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Chris Boswell	PK	Sr.	Rice	Can argue PK's place in NFL, but he's No. 1 leg prospect.
2. Cairo Santos	PK	Sr.	Tulane	Bring the hate if you must, but Groza winner is No. 2 leg.
3. Ryan Grant	WR	Sr.	Tulane	Led C-USA with 95.8 receiving yards per game in 2012.
4. Justin Ellis	DT	Sr.	Louisiana Tech	Ranked among the top 10 pro prospects (8th) at his position.
5. Khyri Thornton	DT	Sr.	Southern Miss	See Justin Ellis, just one spot later.
6. Gator Hoskins	FB	Sr.	Marshall	Yes, he's a TE, but think Vonta Leach, eh?
7. Marco Nelson	FS	Sr.	Tulsa	A center fielder who doesn't mind hitting (80 tackles).
8. Justin Jones	TE	Sr.	East Carolina	Want stats? Look elsewhere. Want edge size? Bingo.
9. Jerrion Johnson	SS	Sr.	Southern Miss	A mini-backer with coverage skills.
10. Trey Watts	RB	Sr.	Tulsa	Arguably C-USA's top playmaker with major return skills.

Most Valuable Player	Offensive Player of the Year	Defensive Player of the Year	Newcomer of the Year
Trey Watts, RB, Tulsa	RakeemCato, QB, Marshall	Shawn Jackson, LB, Tulsa	Scotty Young, QB, Louisiana Tech

HONOR ROLL

Most accurate passer	Rakeem Cato	Marshall
Strongest arm	Logan Kilgore	Middle Tennessee
Best scrambler	Taylor McHargue	Rice
Coolest in clutch	Rakeem Cato	Marshall
Toughest to bring down	Kenneth Dixon	Louisiana Tech
Best hands	Tommy Shuler	Marshall
Most dangerous deep threat	Jordan Leslie	UTEP
Best pass blocker	Darius Johnson	Middle Tennessee
Best run blocker	Jake Alexander	Tulsa
Best pass rusher	Derrell Johnson	East Carolina
Best cover corner	Phillip Gaines	Rice
Special teams demon	Trey Watts	Tulsa

FLORIDA INT'L | GOLDEN PANTHERS

C-USA rank: 13 | Record: 3-9 | Sun Belt record: 2-6 (T-8th) | Stadium: FIU Stadium (20,000)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Rob Kinnan-USA TODAY Sports

Kedrick Rhodes

"We took major steps, more than I thought we would. We went over and beyond."

— Junior QB Jake Medlock

GOLDEN PANTHERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Ron Turner — At FIU: 1st year; overall: 42-69, 9 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Shankweiler (run game)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Josh Conklin

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST BOWL: Little Caesars, 2010
RETURNING STARTERS: 7; 3 offense, 4 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Jake Medlock, RB Kedrick Rhodes, WR Willis Wright, DT Isame Faciane, DE Giovani Francois, LB Patrick Jean, FS Justin Halley

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: If he stays healthy, which he didn't last year, Rhodes has the potential for a 1,000-yard season. Wright backed up his breakthrough season of 2012 with an outstanding spring. Jean, a one-time Louisville commitment, was one of the prizes of the 2012 recruiting class.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: In addition to the injury problems Rhodes had last year, Medlock has had health issues in each of his first two seasons. The entire offensive line must be rebuilt, and the defense has numerous holes to fill as well.

OFFENSE

Change is the theme on offense for the Panthers, and not just in personnel.

In addition to eight new starters, including the entire line, the Panthers will be running a pro-style/West Coast scheme with quarterbacks going under center for all but some passing situations. That's a change from recent years when they took shotgun snaps in a spread attack.

For junior Jake Medlock it will be the first time since he was playing for his dad at Fletcher High in Jacksonville, Fla., that he has been called on to do that. But the transition went well in the spring.

Medlock, who threw for 13 touchdowns with only two interceptions in nine games, is one of the three returning starters, along with wide receiver Willis Wright and running back Kedrick Rhodes.

Wright led the Panthers in receiving yards with 633 on 25 catches. He also added five touchdown receptions. Rhodes, a 1,000-yard rusher as a sophomore in 2011, battled ankle problems last season but still led the Panthers in rushing with 714 yards in 10 games.

The issue will be finding blockers. Guard David Delsoin and Donald Senat did have a half-dozen starts between them last season, although Senat's were at guard, not the center position he will man in 2013.

DEFENSE

Four starters — Greg Hickman (moved from end to tackle), tackle Isame Faciane, and defensive backs Sam Miller and Richard Leonard — return to a unit that was a major disappointment in 2012.

But first-year coach Ron Turner came out of spring pleased with the way the line had developed. Junior Giovani Francois had an outstanding spring at one end, and senior Paul Crawford at the other has four career starts.

Sophomore linebacker Patrick Jean was one of the top recruits of the 2012 signing class and looks to be ready to anchor the middle after playing in five games (one start) as a true freshman. Competition for the other two linebacker spots figures to be close in the fall.

Senior Sam Miller and sophomore Richard Leonard had six starts each at the corners. Miller is one of only two returnees who had an interception last year. (Hickman had the other.)

Junior Justin Halley (seven career starts in two seasons, four picks in 2011) and junior Demarkus Perkins fill out the secondary.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Panthers are looking for two new kickers. Redshirt freshman Sergio Sroka, whose father Roberto was a kicker for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1981 and '82, will handle field goals and PATs.

Chris Ayers, also a redshirt freshman, is competing with Medlock for the punting job.

OVERVIEW

After two consecutive bowl trips, FIU was a major disappointment in 2012, which led to the dismissal of coach Mario Cristobal. Turner faces a huge rebuilding task, and the Panthers are going to struggle to stay out of the C-USA basement in their first year in the league.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Jakhari Gore: Gore sat out last year after transferring from LSU. He is in the picture to back up Kedrick Rhodes and can also return punts and kickoffs. FIU is hoping the family ties come through. He is the cousin of former Miami Hurricane running back and current San Francisco 49er Frank Gore.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	12	Jake Medlock*	6-3	220	Jr.
RB	9	Kedrick Rhodes*	5-1	200	Sr.
WR	1	Willis Wright*	6-1	200	Sr.
WR	10	Glenn Coleman	6-2	200	Sr.
TE	80	Ya'keem Griner	6-5	230	So.
TE	33	Zach Schaubhut	6-2	230	Sr.
LT	70	Aaron Nielsen	6-4	270	So.
LG	50	David Delsoin	6-6	305	Jr.
C	59	Donald Senat	6-2	285	Jr.
RG	71	Delmar Taylor	6-4	290	Jr.
RT	76	Yousif Khoury	6-6	315	So.
DEFENSE					
DE	9	Giovani Francois	6-1	260	Jr.
DT	8	Greg Hickman*	6-2	280	Jr.
DT	44	Darrian Dyson	6-3	310	So.
DE	92	Paul Crawford	6-8	275	Sr.
LB	48	Luis Rosado	6-2	220	So.
LB	13	Patrick Jean	6-3	205	So.
LB	35	Davison Colimon	6-2	200	So.
CB	39	Sam Miller*	5-10	180	Sr.
CB	3	Richard Leonard*	5-10	180	So.
SS	14	Demarkus Perkins	6-2	210	So.
FS	32	Justin Halley	6-2	195	Jr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	56	Sergio Sroka	5-11	170	Fr.
P	40	Chris Ayers	6-0	170	Fr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	at Maryland
Sept. 7	UCF
Sept. 14	BETHUNE-COOKMAN
Sept. 21	at Louisville
Oct. 5	at Southern Miss
Oct. 12	UAB
Oct. 26	LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 2	EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 9	at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 16	at UTEP
Nov. 23	MARSHALL
Nov. 29	at FAU

2012 RESULTS

L	at Duke	26-46
W	AKRON (OT)	41-38
L	at UCF	20-33
L	LOUISVILLE	21-28
L	at Louisiana	20-48
L	ARKANSAS STATE	20-34
L	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	30-34
L	at Troy	37-38
L	WESTERN KENTUCKY	6-14
W	at South Alabama	28-20
W	at FAU	34-24
L	ULM (2OT)	17-23

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.0	82
Rushing	145.3	80
Passing	238.4	56
Total	383.7	76
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	31.7	89
Rushing	140.8	36
Passing	262.1	96
Total	402.9	66
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-4	-0.33	82

LOUISIANA TECH | BULLDOGS

C-USA rank: 10 Record: 9-3 WAC record: 4-2 (3rd) Stadium: Joe Aillet Stadium: 30,600

By Geoff Grammer

Photo by AP Photo/The El Dorado News-Times, Michael Orrell

"It is going to be hard to tell what our one need is because I think we have more than one need right now."
— Coach Skip Holtz

BULLDOGS at a GLANCE

COACH: Skip Holtz — At Louisiana Tech, 1st year; overall: 88-71, 13 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tony Petersen
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kim Dameron

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2011
LAST BOWL: 2011, Poinsettia
RETURNING STARTERS: 6; 2 offense, 4 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Scotty Young, RB Kenneth Dixon, WR Hunter Lee, DT Justin Ellis, DE IK Enemkpali, CB Le'Vander Liggins

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: There is no doubt that Kenneth Dixon is the star of the team. He was a Freshman All-American after rushing for 1,194 yards and 27 TDs in 2012. The team has some depth and experience on the defensive line and should be just fine against the run.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Bulldogs lost an awful lot. Aside from the coaching staff, almost every key starter on both sides of the ball is gone, not to mention one of the top kicking duos in back-to-back Ray Guy-winning punter Ryan Allen and kicker Matt Nelson. Unproven talent in the passing game will put a lot of pressure on the sophomore shoulders of Dixon and the run game.

OFFENSE

This ain't Sonny Dykes' offense anymore. And there is no Colby Cameron (4,147 yards, 31 touchdowns) under center.

With first-year coach Skip Holtz at the helm, the Bulldogs are going to have to rely heavily on star running back Kenneth Dixon, who is coming off a near 1,200-yard rushing season with 27 touchdowns as a freshman.

Trying to replace Cameron will be Scotty Young, a junior who transferred from Texas Tech and has not taken a snap in a game since 2009 in high school when he was considered one of the best quarterback prospects in the nation. He solidified the starting role in spring, especially after freshman Ryan Higgins had four turnovers in the spring game.

The top three receivers from last year are gone, as are their 194 receptions and 2,400 receiving yards. D.J. Banks and Ray Holley are the top returners for a unit that needs playmakers to emerge in fall.

Right guard Matthew Shepperd is the only returning starter on the line, and he missed spring ball because of injury.

DEFENSE

Coordinator Kim Dameron may be tinkering throughout the summer because he couldn't have left spring feeling particularly comfortable about his defense.

At least the Bulldogs know they're solid up front. The defensive line boasts three of Tech's four defensive returning starters in left end Kendrick James, right end IK Enemkpali and defensive tackle Shakeil Lucas. And there's some depth, too. Don't be surprised if Kevin Kisseberth pushes James for a starting role or if sophomore Vernon Butler takes some snaps from Lucas in the middle.

Enemkpali and nose tackle Justin Ellis could be the best of the bunch up front and push for all-league consideration.

The back seven lacks a star. The linebacking unit in particular is in need of someone to solidify a starting role. Junior Mike Schrang should emerge as a solid option at middle linebacker but will be pushed by sophomore Beau Fitte.

In the secondary, right cornerback Le'Vander Liggins should be solid as a returning starter, while sophomore safety Kentrell Brice is starting to emerge as a very good player.

SPECIAL TEAMS

T.J. Kijak, a redshirt freshman from nearby Monroe, was the only kicker/punter on the roster a season ago but didn't play behind the dynamic duo of two-time Ray Guy Award-winning punter Ryan Allen and prolific place-kicker Matt Nelson. Kijak got reps at both spots in spring but hardly locked down either job.

Banks is the type of return specialist who could push for all-league honors.

OVERVIEW

There is simply too much turnover to expect much in Holtz's first season in Ruston. There is talent, especially in budding star Dixon, but it may be asking too much of him to carry the offensive load if Young struggles at quarterback. The defense is solid up front and questionable in the back seven.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Scotty Young: The Texas Tech transfer hasn't taken a snap in real action since a prep game in 2009, and he came to Tech to play for Sonny Dykes. Even with that plan gone awry, he's now the man and looked promising in spring drills.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	16	Scotty Young	6-2	210	Jr.
RB	**28**	**Kenneth Dixon***	**6-0**	**215**	**So.**
WR	5	D.J. Banks	5-9	185	Sr.
WR	36	Hunter Lee	5-10	200	Jr.
WR	19	Andrew Guillot	5-10	180	Sr.
WR	3	Paul Turner	5-11	186	So.
LT	78	Mitchell Bell	6-4	330	Jr.
LG	74	Larry Banks	6-4	300	Sr.
C	79	Alec Davis	6-1	275	Sr.
RG	**66**	**Matthew Shepperd***	**6-3**	**305**	**Sr.**
RT	72	Jeremy Graffree	6-3	300	Sr.
DEFENSE					
LE	22	Kendrick James	6-1	245	Sr.
DT	**94**	**Shakeil Lucas***	**6-2**	**285**	**Sr.**
DT	70	**Justin Ellis**	6-2	330	Sr.
RE	**41**	**IK Enemkpali***	**6-2**	**250**	**Sr.**
LB	34	Mike Schrang	6-1	210	Jr.
LB	32	Mitch Villemez	6-1	230	Jr.
CB	15	Bryson Abraham	5-11	175	So.
CB	**13**	**Le'Vander Liggins***	**5-11**	**190**	**Jr.**
S	16	Jabari Prewitt	5-9	182	Jr.
S	11	Lloyd Grogan	6-0	201	Fr.
S	23	Kentrell Brice	5-11	180	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	31	T.J. Kijak	5-8	160	Fr.
P	31	T.J. Kijak	5-8	160	Fr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	at NC State
Sept. 7	LAMAR
Sept. 12	TULANE
Sept. 21	at Kansas
Sept. 28	vs. Army (Dallas, TX)
Oct. 5	at UTEP
Oct. 19	NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 26	at FIU
Nov. 9	SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 16	at Rice
Nov. 23	TULSA
Nov. 30	at UTSA

2012 RESULTS

W	at Houston	56-49
W	RICE	56-37
W	at Illinois	52-24
W	at Virginia	44-38
W	UNLV	58-31
L	TEXAS A&M	57-59
W	IDAHO	70-28
W	at New Mexico State	28-14
W	UTSA	51-27
W	at Texas State	62-55
L	UTAH STATE (OT)	41-48
L	at San Jose State	43-52

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	51.5	1
Rushing	227.2	17
Passing	350.7	3
Total	577.9	1
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	38.5	116
Rushing	185.7	83
Passing	340.4	120
Total	526.1	120
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+13	+1.08	10

SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI GOLDEN EAGLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Marcus Arroyo | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: David Duggan** | **STADIUM: M.M. Roberts Stadium: 36,000**

AT A GLANCE

RECORD:
0-12 overall, 0-8 C-USA (6th, East)

COACH:
Todd Monken — At Southern Miss and overall: 1st year

RETURNING STARTERS:
10, 3 offense, 7 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Tyre Bracken, RB Jalen Richard, RB Kendrick Hardy, WR Dominique Sullivan, WR Chris Briggs, DL Khyri Thornton, LB Alan Howze, CB Deron Wilson, FS Jacorius Cotton

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Golden Eagles return popular assistant David Duggan to run the defense. Duggan will have plenty of experienced players on hand. Offensively, the running back position is deep, while the receiver corps is bolstered by Sullivan and Briggs.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The Golden Eagles will be looking at either a relatively inexperienced quarterback or a redshirt freshman at the position. The offensive line also has to replace four starters. Neither is a promising situation for Monken.

KEY LOSSES:
WR/KR Tracy Lampley, C Austin Quattrochi, DE Jamie Collins, P Peter Boehme

OVERVIEW:
After a disastrous season under Ellis Johnson, the Golden Eagles cut their losses — all 12 of them — and hired Monken. Expect Monken to eventually resurrect the program in a realigned and weakened Conference USA, but he'll need time.

Well, that was a disaster. Big changes afoot.

After going winless for the first time in the program's modern-day history — and for only the second time since 1925 — Southern Miss moved quickly to dismiss first-year coach Ellis Johnson and replace him with Todd Monken. Hiring Monken follows a proven formula. Monken came to Hattiesburg after serving as Oklahoma State offensive coordinator, the same path Larry Fedora took when he assumed command of the program in 2008.

Whether Monken can have as successful a run as Fedora did with four bowl trips in four seasons and a Conference USA title and 12-win season in 2011 remains to be played out. But it likely won't be as miserable as last year when the Golden Eagles ended a string of 18-straight winning seasons and watched their once proud defense tumble to the lower half of the NCAA rankings.

Despite the program's struggles a year ago, Monken said the Southern Miss opening was attractive.

"First and foremost you try to look for a place that has a track record of winning," Monken said. "Until last season, Southern Miss had 18-straight winning seasons and had been to 10 straight bowl games.

"Also, within a five-hour radius you really have some good players along with excellent facilities and an excellent fan base. There were so many positives to it, so much more positive than one coach and one (unsuccessful) year."

OFFENSE

What was a prolific offense under Fedora two years ago struggled under Johnson, but there was a reason.

The Golden Eagles were without an experienced quarterback, a situation that will hinder Monken's first USM spread offense.

The spring ended with strong-armed 6-5 redshirt freshman Kyle Sloter in a solid position for the starting job. Ricky Lloyd, who started two games a year ago, was limited to non-contact drills in spring workouts after tearing his ACL midway through last season, but may get the nod because of his experience.

If Monken's offense is to do any damage, it will come from the relatively strong running back position. Sophomore Jalen Richard is the team's leading returning rusher (426 yards), but veteran Kendrick Hardy and sophomore Tyre Bracken should get plenty of work, too. Hardy, a senior, rushed for 903 yards and seven touchdowns as a freshman. Senior Jeremy Hester, who mostly returned kickoffs his first two seasons, had 271 rushing yards last year.

"On offense, this is one of our positions of strength," Monken said. "Jalen played as a true freshman. Hardy is back. We're very talented at running back. It's a place where we have depth and guys who have played."

The Golden Eagles will possess impressive size at receiver, where 6-5 junior Chris Briggs and 6-3 senior Dominique Sullivan return. Senior Justin Sims is the leading returning receiver after a 20-catch, 294-yard season.

Where Monken must find replacements is on an offensive line that lost four starters.

DEFENSE

David Duggan, a popular defensive assistant under Fedora, returns to coordinate the defense. The unit had an uncharacteristic lackluster season forcing only 12 takeaways and ranking 108th nationally in rush defense and 113th in scoring defense, allowing nearly 38 points per game.

Duggan will operate mostly out of

a 4-2-5 and should be able to shore up the team's deficiencies behind a strong defensive front anchored by tackle Khyri Thornton, an all-conference candidate, and nose tackle Rakeem Nunez-Roches, who possesses remarkably nimble feet for a 6-2, 290-pound lineman.

Replacing Jamie Collins at defensive end will be a challenge as he had a team-leading 20 tackles for loss each of the past two seasons. Octavius Thomas will move into the role after missing last season because of academic issues.

Of the seven starters back on defense, three play linebacker. Seniors Dylan Reda, Alan Howze and Jerrion Johnson return and are familiar with Duggan, who recruited Reda and Howze to Southern Miss. C.J. Perry signed with the Golden Eagles in 2012, but was sidelined by a transcript problem. It's been resolved and Perry should be extremely involved as a freshman.

The secondary will be led by seniors Deron Wilson and Jacorius Cotton. Wilson has four interception returns for touchdowns in his career and also has scored on a blocked punt return. Cotton, a safety, moved into a starting role as a sophomore and has held the position ever since. The USM secondary has returned 10 interceptions for touchdowns the past two seasons, eight when Duggan was last on staff.

"Dave enjoyed being here before," Monken said. "And he wanted to come back. He still owned a house in Hattiesburg and he wanted to be a coordinator. All that helped with the transition. David is a familiar face."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Several key members of the special teams have to be replaced.

Tracy Lampley completed his eligibility after returning kickoffs and punts the past four seasons, a role that resulted in two kickoff and two punt returns for touchdowns. Sims, who returned kickoffs along with Lampley, should become even more involved. He averaged 22.6 yards — or two more yards than Lampley — per return last year.

The kicking game also must recover from a key loss. Peter Boehme served as the team's punter for four years and averaged 40 yards per kick during his career. His successor likely will be Matthew Moseley, who had a school-record punt of 73 yards while at Tennessee State in 2011.

Place-kicker Corey Acosta returns after moving into a starting role last season. Acosta made 11 of 17 field goal attempts, including both of his kicks from 50 or more yards. He enters his junior season having made seven of his last nine, including a career-long of 51 yards.

— Phil Stukenborg

Deron Wilson
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2012 stats: 154.6 ypg rushing (5th in C-USA/62nd NCAA), 168.2 passing (11th/108th), 322.8 total offense (10th/106th), 19.7 ppg (12th/110th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Ricky Lloyd	So.	Played in five games and made two starts in '12 before injury.	Kyle Sloter, Fr.
RB	Jalen Richard	So.	Ahead of the pack at offense's deepest position.	Kendrick Hardy, Sr.
WR	Dominique Sullivan*	Sr.	Led team with three touchdown receptions.	D.J. Thompson, So.
WR	Chris Briggs	Jr.	At 6-4, 210 pounds, has NFL build.	Rickey Bradley Jr., Sr.
WR	Francisco Llanos	Sr.	Undersized at 5-8; ranked second with 20 catches in '12.	Dimitri Smith, Jr.
WR	Justin Sims*	Sr.	Averaged 14.7 yards per reception in 2012.	Cooper Harrington, So.
LT	Rashod Hill	So.	Played behind veteran Jason Weaver a year ago.	Aaron Reed, So.
LG	Garrett Clark	So.	Another first-year starter.	Taylor Peterson, Jr.
C	Jordan Greene	So.	Makes his debut after departure of Austin Quattrochi.	Devin Farrior, Fr.
RG	Ed Preston*	Sr.	Only starter returning on inexperienced line.	Michael Brinson, So.
RT	Cedric Chisolm	Jr.	Former JC transfer also moving into first starting role.	Vincent Brown, Sr.
K	Corey Acosta	Jr.	Made field goals of 51 and 50 in back-to-back games.	Larsen Real, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2012 stats: 207.5 ypg rushing (11th in C-USA/108th NCAA), 219.0 passing (2nd/43rd), 426.5 total defense (6th/83rd), 37.8 ppg (10th/113th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Michael Smith*	So.	Earned starting job in '12; had 6.5 TFL.	Nic Bekkers, Jr.
DT	Khyri Thornton*	Sr.	Is team's best defensive lineman and top NFL prospect.	Adam Williams, Jr.
NT	Rakeem Nunez-Roches*	Jr.	Returning starter had 6 TFL in '12.	Rod Crayton, Fr.
DE	Octavius Thomas	Sr.	Sat out 2012 because of academic issues.	Anthony Wilson, Sr.
LB	Dylan Reda*	Sr.	Fourth-leading tackler had team-high 3 QB hurries.	Terrick Wright, So.
LB	Alan Howze*	Sr.	Team's top returning tackler recovered two fumbles.	C.J. Perry Jr., Fr.
LB	Jerrion Johnson*	Sr.	One of three senior linebackers returning.	Alex Smith, Sr.
CB	Kalan Reed	So.	Developed into key contributor in '12.	Alexander Walters, Sr.
CB	Deron Wilson*	Sr.	Has five INT returns for touchdowns in career.	Urell Johnson, Jr.
SS	Emmanuel Johnson	Jr.	Extremely athletic and productive on special teams.	DeBarriaus Miller, So.
FS	Jacorius Cotton	Sr.	Should prosper with return of coordinator David Duggan.	Ed Wilkins, So.
P	Matt Moseley	So.	Takes over for four-year starter Peter Boehme.	Cliff Hurst, Fr.

*Returning Starter

TULANE | GREEN WAVE

C-USA rank: 12 Record: 2-10 C-USA record: 2-6 (6th, West) Stadium: Superdome (69,703)

By Tammy Nunez

Photo by Derick E. Hingle-USA TODAY Sport

"Now there is a quarterback battle. You can feel it."
— Coach Curtis Johnson

GREEN WAVE at a GLANCE

COACH: Curtis Johnson — At Tulane and overall: 2-10, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Eric Price
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Jon Sumrall, Lionel Washington

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1998
LAST BOWL: 2002, Hawaii
RETURNING STARTERS: 15; 7 offense, 6 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Nick Montana, RB Orleans Darkwa, WR Ryan Grant, DT Chris Davenport, CB Lorenzo Doss, S Darion Monroe, CB Jordan Batiste, K Cairo Santos

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Jordan Batiste, Lorenzo Doss and Darion Monroe all started as freshmen in the defensive backfield, learning on the run and competing well against more seasoned players. Santos is the nation's best. Running back Orleans Darkwa has returned to health after incurring a high ankle sprain last fall. He made significant gains in the spring.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Green Wave is dangerously thin at linebacker and exited the spring with players still harboring injuries, including Dominique Robertson and Zach Davis. The offensive line underperformed all fall and in the spring — it was a constant source of coach Curtis Johnson's ire.

OFFENSE

Quarterbacks Nick Montana and incumbent Devin Powell split starting snaps this spring, but Montana is expected to be the more polished choice thanks to competing at Mount San Antonio Junior College in California.

Montana, the son of Pro Hall of Fame passer Joe Montana, threw for 2,652 yards last season and is known for his accuracy — a huge plus in coach Curtis Johnson's system, which is designed off the New Orleans Saints scheme. Johnson mastered the attack during his six years as the franchise's wide receivers coach.

Powell has more experience in Johnson's system, though he made only two starts last fall. Montana looked more comfortable in the spring game, but Powell has tremendous arm strength.

Senior running back Orleans Darkwa is hoping to return to full health. He has rushed 475 times for 2,090 yards and 27 touchdowns in his career. Last season he was plagued with a high-ankle injury that limited him to nine games with only 241 rushing yards and three touchdowns. He was mostly recovered this spring and expected to be fine by the summer.

The offensive line has not played well in the past two seasons and loses right tackle Eric Jones to graduation. It didn't look much better in the spring — so there are serious questions up front.

DEFENSE

The secondary is talented and the pride of the defense. Sophomore defensive backs Lorenzo Doss, Jordan Batiste and Darion Monroe starred and started all last fall.

The defensive line adds LSU's Chris Davenport, a graduate student with one year of eligibility left, which he will spend at nose tackle. That helps a unit that lost productive end Austen Jacks to graduation.

The linebackers are a concern because of injury.

Zach Davis started a middle linebacker last fall but had offseason surgery and did not make it back for spring football. He has the most starting experience of the linebacker crew, although Matthew Bailey has some experience and a bastion of talent.

SPECIAL TEAMS

This is a huge strength for Tulane. The unit returns Lou Groza-winning kicker Cairo Santos, who went 21-for-21 on field goal attempts last season. Tulane made dramatic improvements in 2012 on special teams and should have a decent return game considering all the speed Johnson recruited for his first season in 2012.

OVERVIEW

Tulane should be able to drastically improve its record this season between the maturing of Johnson-recruited freshmen for their sophomore campaigns, and a schedule that is weaker than it's been in years (the Green Wave is especially happy to see Houston switching conferences).

The Green Wave has no SEC team on the docket and its strongest non-conference opponent is either Syracuse or Louisiana Tech. In conference, Tulane's toughest foe is Tulsa or East Carolina, but has winnable games against North Texas, Florida Atlantic, Texas-San Antonio and Rice.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Nick Montana: He signed with Washington out of high school, but moved to Mt. San Antonio Junior College, where he completed 203 of 321 passes last season and led the team to an 11-1 record. He passed for 300-plus yards on three occasions.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	11	Nick Montana	6-3	200	Jr.
HB	26	Orleans Darkwa	6-0	210	Sr.
RB	25	Josh Rounds	5-11	190	So.
WR	**80**	**Justyn Shackleford***	**5-11**	**171**	**Jr.**
WR	**3**	**Ryan Grant***	**6-1**	**190**	**Sr.**
TE	**88**	**Matt Marfisi***	**6-6**	**250**	**Jr.**
LT	78	Todd Jacquet	6-5	282	So.
LG	**74**	**Adam Skidmore***	**6-6**	**300**	**Jr.**
C	**64**	**Mike Henry***	**6-5**	**290**	**Sr.**
RG	**72**	**Rio Mares***	**6-4**	**302**	**Sr.**
RT	**70**	**Sean Donnelly***	**6-8**	**311**	**Jr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	48	Royce LaFrance	6-3	235	So.
DT	**93**	**Kenny Welcome***	**6-2**	**290**	**Jr.**
NT	94	Chris Davenport	6-4	330	Sr.
DE	**92**	**Julius Warmsley***	**6-2**	**271**	**Sr.**
LB	**45**	**Matthew Bailey***	**5-11**	**203**	**Jr.**
LB	56	Dominique Robertson	6-1	191	Sr.
LB	21	Kyle Davis	5-11	204	Sr.
CB	**7**	**Jordan Batiste***	**5-8**	**169**	**So.**
CB	**6**	**Lorenzo Doss***	**5-11**	**168**	**So.**
SS	5	Brandon LeBeau	6-0	198	Jr.
FS	**2**	**Darion Monroe***	**5-10**	**190**	**So.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**19**	**Cairo Santos***	**5-8**	**160**	**Sr.**
P	**83**	**Peter Picerelli***	**6-1**	**190**	**So.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	JACKSON STATE
Sept. 7	SOUTH ALABAMA
Sept. 12	at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 21	at Syracuse
Sept. 28	at Louisiana-Monroe
Oct. 5	NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 12	EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 26	TULSA
Nov. 2	at FAU
Nov. 9	at UTSA
Nov. 23	UTEP
Nov. 30	at Rice

2012 RESULTS

L	RUTGERS	12-24
L	at Tulsa	10-45
L	OLE MISS	0-39
L	ULM	10-63
L	at Louisiana	13-41
W	SMU	27-26
L	at UTEP	20-24
W	UAB	55-45
L	RICE	47-49
L	at Memphis	23-37
L	EAST CAROLINA	23-28
L	at Houston	17-40

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	21.4	97
Rushing	39.6	119
Passing	279.9	33
Total	319.5	109
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	38.4	115
Rushing	222.9	114
Pass	259.7	95
Total	482.6	114
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 9	- 0.75	101

UAB | BLAZERS

C-USA rank: 7 | Record: 3-9 | C-USA record: 2-6 (5th, East) | Stadium: Legion Field (72,000)

By Steve Irvine

Photo by Michael Wade

"What we talk about as a program is planting a seed in the ground, which is what we did last season."
— Coach Garrick McGee

BLAZERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Garrick McGee — At UAB and overall: 3-9, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Richard Owens
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Reggie Johnson

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: None
LAST BOWL: 2004, Hawaii Bowl
RETURNING STARTERS: 18; 9 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Darrin Reaves, WR Jackie Williams, TE Kennard Backman, DT Deric Scott, LB Patrick Bastien, OLB Jake Ganus, S Calvin Jones, K Ty Long

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The offense should be able to move the ball through the air and on the ground and has two proven quarterbacks. The defense is a year older and has playmakers up front. Kicker Ty Long is one of the best at his position in the conference.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Starting quarterback Austin Brown battled through injuries last season and was hurt again in spring practice. The defense still hasn't proven it can stop opposing offenses on a regular basis, and the secondary is still very young.

OFFENSE

Rugged and quick junior Darrin Reaves rushed for 1,037 yards last season, marking only the second time in school history that a running back eclipsed the 1,000-yard mark.

He's a part of an offense that is potentially filled with playmakers, including running backs Greg Franklin and Bashr Coles. Quarterback Austin Brown returns after earning C-USA All-Freshman honors, and senior Jonathan Perry, the starter early last season, is pushing to regain the starting nod. Both can threaten defenses with their arm and legs.

Senior wide receiver Jackie Williams is entering his third season as the team's most dependable target and fourth season as a starter. Tight end/wide receiver Nolen Smith returns after missing last year with a knee injury; he will immediately become a matchup problem. Junior Kennard Backman appears to be ready to become perhaps the best tight end in C-USA.

Things also look good up front with the return of four starters and the possible emergence of redshirt freshman Victor Salako. The Blazers will miss the leadership — and talent — of graduated tackle Chris Hubbard, but Kaycee Ike should take over the leadership role.

DEFENSE

Will a change in philosophy bring about defensive improvement? UAB still plans on lining up in a 4-3 formation at times, but expect the Blazers to use a 3-4 most of the time during C-USA play.

The new look should fit the personnel a little better, particularly with what promises to be a strong and deep group of linebackers. The Blazers don't have anyone like former middle linebacker Marvin Burdette, who was the country's leader in tackles last season, but they can build around seniors Patrick Bastien and Daniel White and sophomore Shaq Jones.

On the outside, UAB will line up with playmakers like converted safety Jake Ganus, speedy Derek Slaughter and sophomores Destin Challenger and Tevin Crews.

UAB also should be better up front with Connor Boyett returning to his natural position at defensive end, Diaheem Watkins coming back from an injury to pressure quarterbacks on the other side, and Deric Scott, Jontavious Morris and Jewel Christian lining up inside.

The secondary returns nearly everyone, but still needs plenty of seasoning. Safety Calvin Jones, the team's third-leading tackler last season, is the only senior of the bunch.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ty Long rarely misses field goals and showed marked improvement as a kickoff specialist last season. Hunter Mullins should be one of the top punters in the conference, and Jackie Williams is a threat in the return game.

OVERVIEW

UAB needs to weather an early schedule that includes trips to Troy, LSU and Vanderbilt. If the Blazers come through that stretch relatively healthy, then they could threaten for the top half of the revamped Conference USA. Coach Garrick McGee has certainly changed the attitude in the program, but that needs to start showing up in the win-loss column.

TOP NEWCOMER

S T.J. McCollum: The local product — from nearby Clay-Chalkville High in Pinson, Ala. — could step right in and see plenty of playing time as a true freshman. He has nice size (6-3, 205) and athleticism. The three-star recruit picked off eight passes in his final two seasons of high school.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	11	**Austin Brown***	6-1	210	So.
RB	5	**Darrin Reaves***	5-10	210	Jr.
WR	1	**Jamarcus Nelson***	5-11	160	Jr.
WR	12	Nolen Smith	6-3	215	Jr.
WR	15	**Jackie Williams***	5-11	190	Sr.
TE	86	**Kennard Backman***	6-3	260	Jr.
QT	60	**Kaycee Ike***	6-5	300	Sr.
QG	71	**Cameron Blankenship***	6-4	305	So.
C	54	**Billy Autrey***	6-2	290	Sr.
SG	76	**Brian O'Leary***	6-2	290	Jr.
ST	77	Victor Salako	6-6	315	Fr.
DEFENSE					
DE	48	**Connor Boyett***	6-5	285	Sr.
DT	95	**Deric Scott***	6-3	285	Sr.
DE	46	**Diaheem Watkins***	6-4	260	Jr.
LB	4	Jake Ganus	6-2	215	So.
LB	47	**Patrick Bastien***	6-3	230	Sr.
LB	42	Shaq Jones	6-3	220	So.
LB	33	Derek Slaughter	5-11	215	So.
CB	3	**Lamarcus Farmer***	5-11	170	So.
CB	21	Kelton Brackett	5-11	190	So.
S	11	**Calvin Jones***	5-10	190	Sr.
S	10	**Vashon Landers***	6-1	175	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	2	**Ty Long***	6-2	190	Jr.
P	36	**Hunter Mullins***	6-3	195	Jr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	at Troy
Sept. 7	at LSU
Sept. 21	NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 28	at Vanderbilt
Oct. 5	FAU
Oct. 12	at FIU
Oct. 26	at UTSA
Nov. 2	MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 9	at Marshall
Nov. 16	at East Carolina
Nov. 23	RICE
Nov. 30	SOUTHERN MISS

2012 RESULTS

L	TROY	29-39
L	at South Carolina	6-49
L	at Ohio State	15-29
L	TULSA	42-49
W	S.E. LOUISIANA	52-3
L	at Houston	17-39
L	EAST CAROLINA	35-42
L	at Tulane	45-55
W	at Southern Miss	27-19
W	MARSHALL	38-31
L	MEMPHIS	9-46
L	at UCF	24-49

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.3	67
Rushing	110.2	109
Passing	308.8	19
Total	419.0	50
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	37.5	111
Rushing	182.7	80
Pass	244.6	77
Total	427.3	84
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-9	-0.75	Tie/101

CLEMSON TIGERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chad Morris | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brent Venables** | **CLEMSON MEMORIAL: 81,473**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
11-2 overall, 7-1 ACC (T-1st, Atlantic)

COACH:
Dabo Swinney — At Clemson and overall: 40-21, 4-plus years

RETURNING STARTERS:
12; 6 offense, 5 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Tajh Boyd, WR Sammy Watkins, TB Rod McDowell, WR Martavis Bryant, DE Vic Beasley, DT Josh Watson, LB Spencer Shuey, S Travis Blanks

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Tigers averaged 41 points per game in 2012 (sixth nationally) and have enough weapons to repeat that, with Boyd leading the way. Clemson's front seven was much-improved a year ago and should be able to trend upward. Shuey is a tackle machine and a gritty leader.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Clemson gave up too many big plays through the air last season, allowing 240.3 passing yards per game. With starting safeties Rashard Hall and Jonathan Meeks graduated, it could be addition by subtraction or an even bigger concern. With inexperienced freshmen behind them, Blanks and Smith will carry a heavy load. Several of the veteran corners must also shed inconsistency and/or injury concerns.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Andre Ellington, WR DeAndre Hopkins, DE Malliciah Goodman, LB Jonathan Williard, S Rashard Hall

OVERVIEW:
Swinney has Clemson on the right track. The Tigers are 21-5 over the past two seasons, putting together back-to-back 10-win seasons for the first time since 1989-90. The program possesses the elements for a national title run, although season bookend games against Georgia and South Carolina will say plenty about that. Still, this is a confident, talented bunch that is the ACC favorite.

Experienced Tigers Ready to Challenge for BCS Title

Minutes after spring practice wrapped up in mid-April, Dabo Swinney was already looking ahead.

"We're in a good spot from a get-ready standpoint," Clemson's fifth-year coach said.

"Now we've got to go to work Monday and start the transformation process between now and August camp. That's what the next phase of this journey is: transforming our minds mentally and our bodies physically and coming back better."

That sort of mindset is Swinney's everyday ethos — a big reason why Clemson has established itself as one of the ACC's best teams since he took over the program's reins midway through the 2008 season.

Under Tommy Bowden, Clemson was good but not great — a team that always seemed to fall agonizingly short in the most crucial moments.

Swinney has changed that.

In his tenure, the Tigers have won or shared three ACC Atlantic Division titles, Clemson's first ACC title since 1991 and qualified for the program's first BCS bowl game. Last year, Clemson capped off an 11-2 season with a thrilling 25-24 Chick-fil-A Bowl win over LSU.

The Tigers have back-to-back 10-win seasons for the first time since 1989-90, and with 2012's core returning, even bigger things are expected this fall.

Season-bookend games against border rivals Georgia and South Carolina will say plenty about Clemson's national title hopes, but anything less than an ACC title won't sit well with the Tigers' rabid fan base.

OFFENSE

Swinney's biggest victory of the offseason came when quarterback Tajh Boyd spurned the NFL Draft for his senior season at Clemson.

Boyd has developed into an All-American under offensive coordinator Chad Morris. The dual threat and Heisman candidate threw for 3,896 yards and 36 touchdowns against 13 interceptions as a junior, adding 514 rushing yards and 10 touchdowns on the ground.

Despite the graduation of two-time 1,000-yard rusher Andre Ellington and the early departure of star receiver DeAndre Hopkins to the NFL, Clemson's offense is loaded with weapons.

A drug suspension and injuries led to a sophomore slump for Sammy Watkins; he missed most of four games and went from 82 receptions with 1,219 yards and 12 scores as a freshman to 57 catches, 708 yards and three scores in 2012. However, he is fully healthy and ready to take over Hopkins' boundary receiver spot as one of the nation's most explosive players.

Former four-star signees Martavis Bryant and Charone Peake will also be counted upon heavily.

New starting tailback Rod McDowell will run behind an improving, deep offensive line that returns four starters from 2012, with Rimington Trophy finalist Dalton Freeman the only loss. Hard-nosed sophomore Ryan Norton will replace Freeman at center, with coaches also pushing starting tackles Brandon Thomas and Gifford Timothy hard.

Morris likes balance and power, so this is an important development: Sophomore Stanton Seckinger likely will begin as the starting tight end; junior Sam Cooper, expected to replace All-ACC selection Brandon Ford, tore his ACL in the Tigers' spring game.

DEFENSE

Clemson showed consistent improvement in Brent Venables' first season as

defensive coordinator. The Tigers allowed more than 27 points only once in the final six games, and finished third in the ACC in scoring defense. Venables uses a 4-3 scheme, which prizes reaction over thought, and players bought into it with a slight learning curve.

"Our leaders have to step up and be leaders," Venables said. "We have to do better than we did a year ago. If you continue what you've been doing, you'll get the same result. We want to be a couple games better, so we need to change what we're doing and I think we will."

Juniors Grady Jarrett, Josh Watson and DeShawn Williams form a formidable defensive tackle rotation, and junior end Vic Beasley looks to build on a 2012 that saw him pile up 8.5 sacks in part-time duty. He'll be the only new defensive line starter.

At linebacker, active, tough senior Spencer Shuey piled up 93 tackles despite starting only seven games. He displaced former five-star signee Stephone Anthony at midseason and developed into a defensive leader. With leading tackler Jonathan Willard graduated, Shuey will move outside to Willard's "Will" linebacker spot and Anthony will reclaim his old role in the middle. He had 77 tackles there in 2012.

Senior Quandon Christian brings versatility and athleticism at the "Sam" spot, a linebacker/defensive back hybrid.

With the loss of starters Rashard Hall and Jonathan Meeks, safety is a concern; neither projected starter, Travis Blanks or Robert Smith, has started a game there.

Blanks is a returning Freshman All-American with excellent athleticism and cover skills. Veterans Darius Robinson, Bashaud Breeland, Garry Peters and Martin Jenkins all bring experience at corner.

Robinson is coming off a broken ankle that cost him the second half of 2012, while Jenkins redshirted following a groin injury. Breeland was also hampered by injuries. Touted freshman Mackensie Alexander could make an immediate impact.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Chandler Catanzaro has developed into one of the nation's top kickers; he made 18 of 19 field goal attempts last season and has made 27 of his last 28 dating back to November 2011. He should be a candidate for the Lou Groza Award, given to the nation's best placekicker.

Sophomore Bradley Pinion has a booming leg and will handle punt and kickoff duties this season; the only question is accuracy.

Watkins will be the primary kick returner; he has excellent speed and had a game-changing, 89-yard touchdown return at Maryland as a freshman.

— Greg Wallace

Tajh Boyd
Photo by Cal Sport Media via AP Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2012 stats: 191.1 ypg rushing (4th ACC/36th NCAA), 321.6 passing (1st/13th), 512.7 total offense (1st/9th), 41.0 ppg (1st/6th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tajh Boyd*	Sr.	ACC Player of the Year and Heisman candidate.	Cole Stoudt, Jr.
RB	Rod McDowell	Sr.	Speedy backup gets his shot as starter.	D.J. Howard, Jr.
WR	Sammy Watkins*	Jr.	Explosive player looks to bounce back from soph. slump.	Germone Hopper, Fr.
WR	Adam Humphries	Jr.	Sure handed slot receiver a steady piece of offense.	Martavis Bryant, Jr.
WR	Charone Peake	Jr.	Former four-star recruit gets shot in spotlight.	Mike Williams, Fr.
TE	Stanton Seckinger	So.	Converted WR gets chance after Sam Cooper tore ACL.	Jordan Leggett, Fr.
LT	Brandon Thomas*	Sr.	All-ACC pick had standout junior season.	Isaiah Battle, So.
LG	David Beasley*	Jr.	Got in shape as sophomore, but needs consistency.	Kalon Davis, Jr.
C	Ryan Norton	So.	Gritty player steps in for two-time Rimington finalist.	Jay Guillermo, Fr.
RG	Tyler Shatley*	Sr.	Converted defensive tackle brings big toughness.	Reid Webster, Jr.
RT	Gifford Timothy*	Jr.	Battled injuries, but showed promise in 2012.	Shaq Anthony, So.
K	Chandler Catanzaro*	Sr.	One of college football's most consistent kickers.	Ammon Lakip, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2012 stats: 155.9 ypg rushing (8th ACC/57th NCAA), 240.3 passing (6th/71st), 396.2 total defense (7th/63rd), 24.9 ppg (3rd/48th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Vic Beasley	Jr.	Inherits full-time role; had 8.5 sacks as part-timer.	Ebenezer Ogundeko, Fr.
NG	Grady Jarrett*	Jr.	Fire-hydrant build makes an excellent run-stopper.	D.J. Reader, So.
DT	Josh Watson*	Jr.	Lived in opposing backfields in 2012 as first-year starter.	DeShawn Williams, Jr.
DE	Corey Crawford*	Jr.	Versatile end with excellent pass-rush skills.	Tavaris Barnes, Jr.
LB	Quandon Christian*	Sr.	Hybrid 'backer can cover and also rush QBs well.	Tony Steward, Jr.
LB	Stephone Anthony	Jr.	Lost job to Shuey, but coaches confident in 5-star.	B.J. Goodson, So.
LB	Spencer Shuey*	Sr.	Tackling machine will try and repeat magic outside.	Kellen Jones, So.
CB	Darius Robinson	Sr.	Recovering from broken ankle that ended 2012 early.	Martin Jenkins, Jr.
CB	Bashaud Breeland	Jr.	Rangy but injured corner needs to stay on field more.	Garry Peters, Jr.
S	Travis Blanks	So.	Frosh All-America makes smooth transition from LB.	Jadar Johnson, Fr.
S	Robert Smith	Jr.	Steady contributor gets a bigger role this season.	Ronald Geohaghan, Fr.
P	Bradley Pinion	So.	Big leg, but needs more overall consistency.	Andy Teasdall, Fr.

*Returning Starter

FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jimbo Fisher | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeremy Pruitt** | **STADIUM: Doak Campbell Stadium: 82,300**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
12-2, 7-1 ACC (1st, Atlantic)

COACH:
Jimbo Fisher — At FSU and overall: 31-10, 3 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
11; 6 offense, 4 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Devonta Freeman, RB James Wilder Jr., WR Rashad Greene, WR Greg Dent, DE Mario Edwards Jr., LB Telvin Smith, CB Lamarcus Joyner, S Tyler Hunter

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
FSU returns four offensive linemen from a team that set a school record with 40 rushing touchdowns in 2012. The dynamic duo of Devonta Freeman and James Wilder Jr. in the backfield will have every Seminole opponent fearing the run game.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Holding on to the football was an issue for Florida State in 2012. The Seminoles fumbled 24 times and were tied for 110th in the nation with 17 lost fumbles. At times, the only thing holding back FSU's offense was itself. The Seminoles finished the season 106th in penalty yards and 85th in penalty yards per game.

KEY LOSSES:
QB EJ Manuel, WR Rodney Smith, OL Menelik Watson, DE Bjoern Werner, DE Brandon Jenkins, CB Xavier Rhodes, PK Dustin Hopkins

OVERVIEW:
The schedule works out nicely for Florida State. The Seminoles open the season at ACC newcomer Pittsburgh on Labor Day before non-conference home contests with Nevada and Bethune-Cookman. Trips to Clemson, where FSU hasn't won since 2001, and Florida will prove difficult, but the rest of the slate isn't very intimidating. Should FSU get past Clemson in late October, another ACC title should be expected for the Seminoles.

Old Swagger Returns; New Faces Arrive

For the first time in four years as Florida State coach, Jimbo Fisher has quarterback competition going into a season.

EJ Manuel last season guided FSU to a 12-2 record, an ACC title and an Orange Bowl championship. It was only the second 12-win season in school history and the first ACC title since 2005.

Those are staggering numbers for a school that won at least 10 games every year during the 1990s and won every ACC title from 1992-2000.

With 31 wins in his first three seasons, Fisher seems to have FSU steered back in the right direction, but now come changes, and not just at quarterback.

Fisher had to replace a number of coaches in the offseason, including both coordinators, quarterbacks coach, running backs coach, special teams coordinator and recruiting coordinator.

The offense returns six starters and a majority of skill-position players, but the defense was depleted by the NFL Draft. If the Seminoles can come together defensively and jell with their new signal-caller, another 10-win season should be expected in Tallahassee.

OFFENSE

Redshirt freshman Jameis Winston heads a trio vying for the starting quarterback job. Redshirt freshman Sean Maguire and redshirt sophomore Jacob Coker will also have their chance, but if the spring game was any indication, the job may be Winston's to lose.

He threw for 205 yards on 12-of-15 passing with a pair of touchdowns, one coming from 58 yards on his first pass of the game. He was also the lone quarterback to take all his snaps with the first-team offense.

"I was very pleased with his performance and he's a very fun guy to coach," Fisher said.

He refused to say the competition was over, however.

"Spring is one thing, and you got an indication of what we're capable of and where we're going, but we have to continue to grow and continue those performances with consistency going into fall camp and throughout summer and all through the season.

Clint Trickett had two years of eligibility left but announced he was leaving FSU only four days after April's spring game. Trickett played in 17 games over two years, starting twice in 2011 while Manuel was injured. Many saw Trickett's departure as another sign the offense now belongs to Winston.

Whoever is under center will be surrounded by a bevy of veterans. Junior running back Devonta Freeman brings a quick step to the backfield, while fellow junior James Wilder Jr. runs with power and is known to drag defenders downfield. They each averaged more than five yards per carry in 2012.

FSU lost receiver Rodney Smith, but returns 21 of the 24 touchdowns caught in 2012. Junior Rashad Greene has 95 receptions for 1,337 yards and 13 TDs in his first two seasons at Florida State and leads a large talented group. Greg Dent was praised throughout spring practice by Fisher, and 6-5 sophomore Kelvin Benjamin showed FSU fans in his freshman campaign that he can come down with nearly anything.

FSU's young but talented offensive line returns everyone except NFL draft pick Menelik Watson. Left tackle Cameron Erving anchors a line that produced more than 200 yards rushing per game and 40 touchdowns in 2012. Bryan Stork, a Rimington Trophy candidate, has the most experience with 35 games played (27 starts).

DEFENSE

Florida State's defense will have a lot to prove in 2013. Last season the Seminoles ranked in the top-5 in nearly every meaningful defensive category, but lost a load of talent to the NFL and defensive coordinator Mark Stoops to the head coaching gig at Kentucky.

Jeremy Pruitt becomes only the third defensive coordinator at FSU in the last three decades. Stoops headed the group for three years following the retirement of FSU legend Mickey Andrews.

Pruitt comes from Alabama, where he headed the secondary from 2010-2012 and won a pair of national championships.

The talent, as always, will be there. Florida State is known for replacing NFL talent with more NFL talent, and this year is no different.

FSU's defensive line will see four new starters, including sophomore defensive end Mario Edwards Jr. Edwards was the top overall recruit out of high school in 2012 and appeared in 11 games as a freshman, recording 17 tackles and 1.5 sacks.

Senior Dan Hicks is back at his original defensive end position after attempting a move to tight end in 2012. He was injured in fall practice and missed the season.

Timmy Jernigan would have started for most college teams in 2012, but FSU had too much depth on the line. Jernigan was still seventh on the team with 46 tackles. He'll join senior Demonte McAllister at tackle.

At linebacker, Vince Williams and Nick Moody left and leave big shoes to fill. Christian Jones had a breakout junior season and led FSU with 95 tackles, 15 more than any other Seminole.

The secondary will be one of the best in the nation, with hard-hitting senior Lamarcus Joyner leading the group. Nick Waisome and Terrence Brooks also bring years of experience to a group that led the nation in pass defense in 2012.

SPECIAL TEAMS

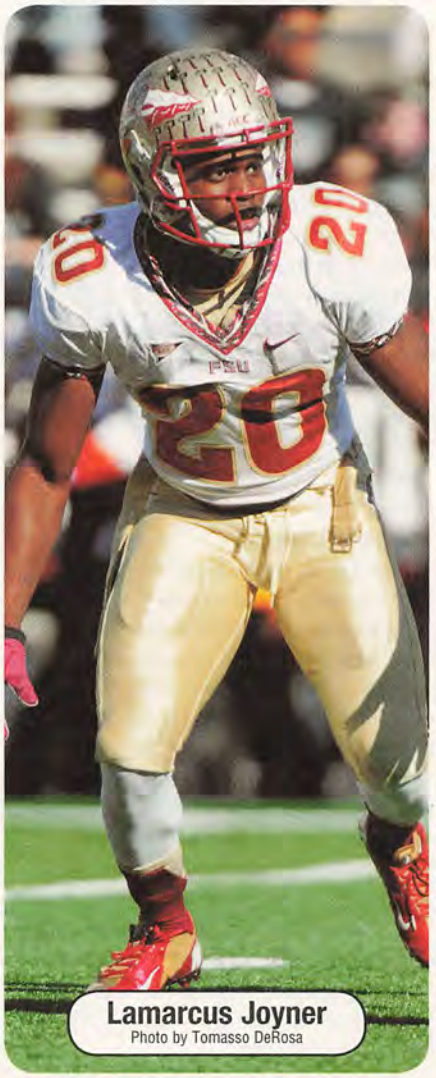
Another big hole to fill for FSU will be at place-kicker. Gone are All-American Dustin Hopkins and his FBS record for points by a kicker.

Replacing Hopkins' signature golden shoes is redshirt freshman Roberto Aguayo. Aguayo impressed during the Garnet and Gold spring game in April, converting five of six field goal attempts that included makes from 51 and 58 yards. Cason Beatty is back for his sophomore season handling punting duties.

After the dismissal of Greg Reid prior to the 2012 season, FSU struggled finding a consistent punt returner. Rashad Greene saw the most returns but was plagued by fumbles. Greene, Kenny Shaw and Tyler Hunter should vie for the role this season.

Lamarcus Joyner and Karlos Williams were a lethal kick return combination in 2012 and hope to repeat more of the same in 2013.

— Sam Hinchee



Lamarcus Joyner
Photo by Tomasso DeRosa

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2012 stats: 206.2 ypg rushing (2nd ACC/24th NCAA), 265.3 passing (7th/39th), 471.5 total offense (8rd/19th), 39.3 ppg (3rd/10th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jameis Winston	Fr.	No. 1-rated QB recruit from 2012 finally gets his chance.	Jacob Coker, So.
RB	Devonta Freeman	Jr.	Leading returning rusher leads two-headed ground attack.	James Wilder Jr., Jr.
FB	Chad Abram	Sr.	Former DB is now only scholarship fullback at FSU.	Shayne Broxsie, Sr.
WR	Greg Dent	Sr.	Earned big praise all spring from Jimbo Fisher.	Kenny Shaw, Sr.
WR	Rashad Greene*	Jr.	Biletnikoff candidate; 1,337 yards and 13 TDs in two seasons.	Kelvin Benjamin, So.
TE	Nick O'Leary*	Jr.	Excellent receiver ready for breakout season.	Kevin Haplea, Sr.
LT	Cam Erving*	Jr.	Converted DE expecting lots in second season as LT.	Trey Pettis, So.
LG	Josue Matias*	Jr.	Second-year starter started every game in 2012.	Jacob Fahrenkrug, Sr.
C	Bryan Stork*	Sr.	Rimington Trophy candidate, most experience on OL.	Austin Barron, Jr.
RT	Bobby Hart	Jr.	Vying for only vacated starting role from 2012.	Bryan Stork, Sr.
RG	Tre' Jackson*	Jr.	Has started 15 straight games, tied for team lead at OL.	Ruben Carter, So.
K	Roberto Aguayo	Fr.	Showed power connecting from 58, 51 in spring game.	Clayton Pickler, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2012 stats: 92.3 ypg rushing (1st ACC/3rd NCAA), 161.9 passing (1st/1st), 254.2 total defense (1st/2nd), 14.7 ppg (1st/6th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Dan Hicks	Sr.	Missed all of 2012 after short-lived moved to TE.	Chris Casher, Fr.
DT	Demonte McAllister	Sr.	Most experienced DL returning, missed spring.	Eddie Goldman, So.
DT	Timmy Jernigan	Jr.	Made himself comfortable in backfield as backup in 2012.	Jacobbi McDaniel, Sr.
DE	Mario Edwards Jr.	So.	Top overall recruit from 2012, will be household name soon.	Giorgio Newberry, So.
LB	Reggie Northrup	So.	Played mostly on special teams as a freshman.	Terrance Smith, So.
LB	Telvin Smith	Sr.	Gets spot all to himself after sharing role in 2012.	Ukeme Eligwe, Fr.
LB	Christian Jones*	Sr.	His 95 tackles in 2012 led the team.	Nigel Terrell, Jr.
CB	Nick Waisome*	Jr.	Started all 14 games in 2012 but missed all of spring.	Ronald Darby, So.
CB	Lamarcus Joyner*	Sr.	Bednarik, Thorpe candidate. Speedster who hits hard.	P.J. Williams, So.
SS	Tyler Hunter	Jr.	Skilled, versatile DB can play safety or corner.	Karlos Williams, Jr.
FS	Terrence Brooks*	Sr.	Playmaking DB led secondary with 52 tackles in 2012.	Gerald Demps, Sr.
P	Cason Beatty*	So.	Averaged 38.3 yards on 47 punts as freshman.	Roberto Aguayo, Fr.

*Returning Starter

LOUISVILLE CARDINALS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Shawn Watson **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Vance Bedford** **STADIUM: Papa John's Cardinal Stadium: 55,000**

AT A GLANCE

2012:
11-2, 5-2 Big East (T-1st)

COACH:
Charlie Strong — At Louisville and overall: 25-14, 3 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 5 offense, 8 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Teddy Bridgewater, RB Dominique Brown, RB Senorise Perry, WR DeVante Parker, WR Damian Copeland, DE Marcus Smith, LB Preston Brown, DE Lorenzo Mauldin, SS Hakeem Smith, FS Calvin Pryor

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Cardinals have experience, depth and speed on both sides of the ball. Louisville proved a lot to itself and to the nation when it concluded the season by dominating Florida's top 5 defense in the Sugar Bowl. Teddy Bridgewater not only established himself as an elite quarterback, but his receiving corps proved to be woefully undervalued. And he'll only have more weapons this season.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The Cardinals could potentially be favored in every regular season game, which is great overall, but perhaps terrible for trying to maintain focus for an entire season. Strong has been able to play the underdog role and keep his team with a collective chip on its shoulder through three seasons. It will be impossible for him to play that card this season.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Jeremy Wright, C Mario Benavides, OL Alex Kupper, WR Andrell Smith, CB Adrian Bushell, LB Daniel Brown

OVERVIEW:
The Cardinals will spend a final year in the newly formed AAC, battling likely (and probably fair) perception issues all season. Their non-conference slate (Ohio, Eastern Kentucky, Florida International and Kentucky) will only spur nonchalance from national observers. Playing in the American won't inspire much either. All Louisville can do is point to last year's Sugar Bowl win over Florida, point to their Heisman candidate and, presumably, keep pointing to the scoreboard.

Cardinals Aim to Match Hoops Team's National Title Success

Louisville coach Charlie Strong looks at 2013 as a lucky year for the entire athletic department.

The Cardinals football team started the year by dismantling Florida, 33-23, in the Sugar Bowl. Other major highlights included the men's basketball team winning the national championship and the women's basketball team finishing runners-up.

When Strong said, "13 is just the right number for the Cardinals," he meant the year, but he might as well have been referring to the record. The Cardinals feel an undefeated season isn't out of the realm of possibility.

The words "national championship" — while not overly discussed — are at least on their minds and that has only happened one other time in school history.

OFFENSE

If Sugar Bowl Most Valuable Player Teddy Bridgewater isn't on your short list for Heisman Trophy consideration, go ahead and add him now.

Bridgewater threw 27 touchdown passes with only eight interceptions last season and completed 68.5 percent of his passes while rolling up 3,718 yards. But you'll never hear him tout his accomplishments. The school wants to mount a Heisman campaign for Bridgewater, but the 6-3, 218-pound junior would rather stay in the background.

Strong said Bridgewater told him, "Just let me be a player. ... If we win, then we'll see what happens."

Thing is, we've seen what happens when he's at his best.

Like when Bridgewater willed himself to play at Rutgers with a broken left wrist that prevented him from taking snaps under center and a sprained right ankle that severely limited his mobility. After watching his team fall behind 14-3 in a must-win game, he entered in the second quarter, completed 20 of 28 attempts for 263 yards and two touchdowns to rally Louisville to a 20-17 win that clinched a share of the Big East title.

Bridgewater is far from a one-man show. Strong calls the Cardinals receiving unit the "strength of our football team."

The Cardinals return their top three receivers from last season including DeVante Parker, who led the team in yards (744), average yards per catch (18.6) and touchdowns (10). Also returning is senior speedster Damian Copeland, who led the team with 50 receptions last season. The unit will be bolstered by the return of Michaelee Harris from a knee injury and a pair of transfers in Robert Clark (Florida) and Matt Milton (Tennessee).

What excites offensive coordinator Shawn Watson most is the depth at tight end thanks in part to Florida transfer Gerald Christian and converted linebacker Jalen Harrington.

The offensive line returns three starters, two of whom will be playing new positions.

Jake Smith moved from right guard to center and Jamon Brown went from right tackle to left tackle. They'll be blocking for a stable of running backs that may have improved despite the decision by leading rusher Jeremy Wright to turn pro.

Dominique Brown returns after he gained 533 yards in 2011 but missed all of last season with a knee injury. Senorise Perry, who led the team with 11 touchdowns last season, will return too after tearing his ACL against Syracuse in the 10th game of the season. Sophomore Corvin Lamb and redshirt freshman Brandon Radcliff will also beef up the rotation.

DEFENSE

The Cardinals return 18 players on defense who started at least one game last season. That's great for the competition in practice, with essentially only three starting positions considered closed.

Senior strong safety Hakeem Smith has started 38 of 39 games the past three seasons. While he isn't the fastest or most athletic player, he's generally always in the right spot making plays. It helps that junior free safety Calvin Pryor has started the past two seasons and they can generally communicate without having to talk.

"We probably have the two best safeties in this conference," Strong said.

Senior linebacker Preston Brown, who led the team in tackles, came into his own last season while making the move from outside to middle. "We're expecting a lot out of Preston Brown," Strong said. "I'm expecting him to become the leader of that defense."

Louisville cornerbacks made big plays when they needed to throughout last season.

Andrew Johnson deflected a pass on fourth down in the end zone to preserve the win over North Carolina. Terell Floyd had the interception to set up the game-winning score in overtime against Cincinnati and set the tone for the Sugar Bowl win with an interception return for a touchdown against Florida. Sophomore Jermaine Reve also brings versatility to the secondary, doubling as a cornerback or safety.

"I tell them all the time, 'You go against the best quarterback in the country defensively, so let's make sure we get better,'" Strong said.

The defensive line was battered during spring drills with six linemen injured by the time they played the spring game. All are expected to return for fall camp including a pair of bookends in Marcus Smith and Lorenzo Mauldin, who combined for 8.5 of the team's 22 sacks last season.

Outside observers will probably be fixated on the Cardinals' offense, but Strong believes the defense can be an equally tough unit. "If we stay humble and stay hungry, then there's no telling what this team can do," he said.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kickoff coverage was, at times, a problem last season. Part of that problem will be rectified by kicker John Wallace developing a stronger leg and many of the first-year players on special teams having more experience. They lost kickoff returner Adrian Bushell to graduation, but will stay dangerous with Corvin Lamb and Robert Clark now returning kicks. As important as any other position though, the Cardinals maintained Grant Donovan as a long snapper.

— C.L. Brown

Teddy Bridgewater
Photo by Brian Tirpak

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2012 stats: 122.7 ypg rushing (6th Big East/102nd NCAA), 296.1 passing (1st/24th), 418.8 total offense (3rd/52nd), 31.2 ppg (2nd/50th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Teddy Bridgewater*	Jr.	Enjoy his play; he'll be taking 2014 snaps in the NFL.	Will Garnder, Fr.
RB	Dominique Brown	Jr.	A more physical runner after missing last season with knee injury.	Senorise Perry, Sr.
WR	DeVante Parker	Jr.	Becomes more dominant every time he takes the field.	Matt Milton, Jr.
WR	Robert Clark	Jr.	Florida transfer injects more speed into fast trio.	Eli Rogers, Jr.
WR	Damian Copeland*	Sr.	Led the Cards with 50 receptions last season.	Robert Clark, Jr.
TE	Gerald Christian	Jr.	Florida transfer leads deep unit of tight ends.	Jalen Harrington, So.
LT	Jamon Brown*	Jr.	Moved to protect blind side; has prototype body at 6-6, 340.	Abraham Garcia, So.
LG	John Miller*	Jr.	Started 11 games last season at same position.	Josh Stearns, So.
C	Jake Smith*	Jr.	Moved to center after spending two seasons starting at right guard.	Mike Romano, So.
RG	Kamran Joyer	Sr.	Gets chance to make impact after starting just once last season.	Chris Acosta, Jr.
RT	Ryan Mack	So.	Ready for extensive playing time, takes over for Jamon Brown.	Joe Manley, Fr.
K	John Wallace*	So.	Was perfect in 14 attempts inside 40 yards, long of 45.	Matthew Nakatani, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2012 stats: 148.0 ypg rushing (6th Big East/48th NCAA), 192.3 passing (1st/16th), 340.3 total defense (4th/23rd), 23.8 ppg (5th/36th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Lorenzo Mauldin	Jr.	Led team with 4.5 sacks last season despite starting only six games.	Finesse Middleton, Fr.
NT	DeAngelo Brown	So.	Developing into prototype lane clogger.	Roy Philon, Sr.*
DT	Brandon Dunn*	Jr.	Leadership skills makes Dunn arguably the heart of the defense.	Shelden Rankins, So.
DE	Marcus Smith*	Sr.	Pass-rushing specialist, has 9.5 sacks the past two seasons.	Lorenzo Mauldin, Jr.
LB	George Durant*	Sr.	Former walk-on started eight games last season.	Champ Lee, Sr.
LB	Preston Brown*	Sr.	Led the team in tackles, becoming leader at Mike linebacker.	Keith Brown, So.
LB	Keith Brown	So.	Started five games as true frosh; season-high 13 tackles vs. Cincinnati.	James Burgess, So.
CB	Andrew Johnson	So.	Made game-saving breakup in end zone against North Carolina.	Jermaine Reve, So.
CB	Terell Floyd*	Jr.	Led team with 3 INTs, including pick-6 on first play of Sugar Bowl.	Charles Gaines, So.
SS	Hakeem Smith*	Sr.	Three-year starter and three-year All-Big East selection.	Jermaine Reve, So.
FS	Calvin Pryor*	Jr.	Bone crusher who led the team with five forced fumbles.	Gerod Holliman, So.
P	Ryan Johnson*	Jr.	Had five punts of more than 50 yards last season.	Josh Appleby, So.

*Returning Starter

MEMPHIS TIGERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Darrell Dickey **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Barry Odom** **STADIUM: Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium: 61,008**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
4-8 overall, 4-4 C-USA (T-3rd, East)

COACH: Justin Fuente — At Memphis and overall: 4-8, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 7 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Brandon Hayes, RB Jai Steib, WR Joe Craig, WR Keiwone Malone, TE Alan Cross, NT Terry Redden, LB Charles Harris, CB Bobby McCain, DB Lonnie Ballentine

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The defensive front is solid, anchored by nose tackle Terry Redden and bolstered by playmaking end Martin Ifedi. In addition, the linebacker position and the secondary upgraded with offseason signees and a key position switch.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
While the Tigers were much better offensively last season, the competition improves markedly with the move from Conference USA to the American Athletic Conference. Jacob Karam returns at quarterback after starting 12 games as a junior, but Fuente could turn to redshirt freshman Paxton Lynch, who has a stronger arm and a tremendous upside. Starting a freshman could be risky, though.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Marcus Rucker, WR Kevin Wright, OL Jordan Devey, LB Akeem Davis, CB Robert Steeples

OVERVIEW:
For the first time in several years, the program appears to be on a solid foundation. Fuente, the former TCU co-offensive coordinator, retained his staff, despite several assistants being pursued by more established programs. Defensively, the Tigers may be able to hold their own in the new league. Offensively, they may be overmatched.

They Heard the 'Click,' but Can They Keep It Up?

It took the new Memphis coaching staff more than half the season to stop the freefall. The Tigers had dropped 39 of 45 games from the start of the 2009 season, but late in coach Justin Fuente's first season something clicked.

Quarterback Jacob Karam, a Texas Tech transfer, began displaying uncanny accuracy. The Tiger defense, maligned and overpowered during the horrid stretch, began getting its share of three-and-outs. As a result, Memphis put together a three-game winning streak, closing the season with Conference USA victories over Tulane, UAB and Southern Miss.

When the Tigers begin play this season as a member of the American Athletic Conference, formerly the Big East, the stakes climb. For at least the 2013 season, the Tigers will be members of a Bowl Championship Series conference.

Whether Fuente's program can continue showing improvement remains to be seen against the likes of Louisville, Cincinnati and Rutgers, better opposition than the Tigers played in C-USA. Fuente understands the challenge, which is one reason he repeatedly told his players during the spring they couldn't consider the program resurrected on the strength of a late winning streak.

"We still have a long way to go," Fuente said. "But I think we've taken a large step in the right direction, especially from a physical standpoint."

Memphis struggled on offense during its previous three seasons, but made some of those steps in the right direction last season. The Tigers averaged 24 points per game, eight more than the previous season, and scored 37 or more in each of their last three games. The U of M nearly doubled its per-game rushing average to 152 yards.

Defensively, the turnaround was remarkable behind coordinator Barry Odom, a former Missouri assistant. In his first stint as a coordinator, Odom had his unit ranked No. 1 in C-USA games and No. 3 in the league overall.

Memphis will play six of its first eight games at home and could position itself for its first postseason invitation since 2008. To accomplish that feat, the Tigers will have to make the same type of progress they did a year ago.

"That (2012) team learned something," Fuente said. "Eventually, they learned how to play together and how to play for something bigger than themselves. They learned how to put the team first. But that team's gone. There's a completely new mix, a completely new dynamic."

OFFENSE

Karam performed admirably in his first season as a starting quarterback. Although he struggled midway through the year, he ended strong. He completed 40 of 52 passes for 579 yards and seven touchdowns in the team's final three games. He was intercepted only once during the stretch.

Despite the late-season success, Karam's starting job isn't a lock. Karam, a senior, was pushed in the spring by 6-6 redshirt freshman Paxton Lynch, who took his share of snaps with the No. 1 offense. Fuente did not name a starter after spring workouts and said the competition would continue through preseason practices.

The running game will be led by Brandon Hayes and Jai Steib. Hayes, a senior, emerged as the starter last season after not playing in the first three games, finishing with 576 yards and six touchdowns, while averaging nearly six yards per carry. Steib, who transferred from a California junior college, settled in as Hayes' backup and rushed for 427 yards and six touchdowns. He had a productive spring, breaking free for multiple long runs in scrimmages.

At receiver, the Tigers added much needed speed with transfer Joe Craig, a former Clemson player. He joins returning leader Keiwone Malone, a former Alabama player who had 44 catches for 476 yards. Craig and Malone have big-play capability and Craig was exceptional gaining yardage after contact in the spring.

Several others could be factors, including sophomore Mose Frazier, a consistent performer in the spring, and redshirt freshman Daniel Hurd, a former Memphis-area high school star. Tight end Alan Cross (23 catches, 301 yards, 5 touchdowns) was a reliable receiver.

DEFENSE

The strength of Fuente's defensive unit will be up front. Terry Redden returns at nose tackle and is a candidate for all-league honors. Veterans abound around him, including senior Corey Jones and redshirt junior Martin Ifedi at the defensive end spots. Ifedi led the team with 11 tackles for loss, including being in on eight sacks.

Although the defense lost its vocal leader, Akeem Davis, at linebacker, the position should be solid with junior Charles Harris returning at middle linebacker and senior Anthony Brown back at one of the outside spots. Ryan Coleman joined the program at mid-year after transferring from a California junior college, and earned a starting job at the other outside spot.

Where the defense will make its greatest improvement from a year ago will be in the secondary, where it should be more athletic. Free safety Lonnie Ballentine has nice size (6-3, 215) and NFL potential, while cornerbacks Bobby McCain and Bakari Hollier are veterans. The defensive backfield got a boost in the spring with the addition of Reggis Ball, who moved from outside linebacker to strong safety and is a punishing tackler.

"As far as athletic ability goes, we've got some guys to work with," Odom said. "They can hang in there pretty good."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Veteran punter Tom Hornsey, a former Australian Rules football player, returns for his senior season after averaging 43.4 yards on 60 kicks. Hornsey's strength is his effectiveness at dropping punts inside the 20. The Tigers must find a place-kicker, as veteran Paulo Henriques graduated and Tyler Spurlock did not return. True freshman Jake Elliott will be a top candidate.

The Tigers made significant improvement on special teams under the direction of James Shibest, a former assistant at Ole Miss and Arkansas. McCain averaged 26 yards on kickoff returns, and Malone averaged 12 yards on punt returns. The Tigers ranked first in C-USA, and 20th nationally, in punt returns with the 12-yard average.

— Phil Stukenborg

Jacob Karam
Photo by Nelson Chenault-US PRESSWIRE

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2012 stats: 151.8 ypg rushing (6th in C-USA/69th NCAA), 166.6 passing (12th/109th), 318.3 total offense (12th/110th), 24.4 ppg (9th/86th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jacob Karam*	Sr.	Solid junior season with 14 touchdowns, 3 interceptions.	Paxton Lynch, Fr.
RB	Brandon Hayes*	Sr.	Moved into starting role at midseason; led team in rushing.	Jai Steib, Sr.
WR	Tevin Jones	So.	Averaged 16.5 yards per reception.	Daniel Hurd, Fr.
WR	Joe Craig	Jr.	Ex-Clemson receiver adds needed speed.	Sam Craft, Fr.
WR	Keiwone Malone*	Jr.	Ex-Alabama player is leading returning receiver.	Mose Frazier, So.
TE	Alan Cross*	So.	Started as a true freshman; five TD receptions.	Jesse Milleson, Sr.
LT	Taylor Fallin	So.	Made two starts as a freshman at left tackle.	Markeith Minnick, Fr.
LG	Chris Schuetz*	Sr.	Former center has made 19 straight starts.	Sam Thomas, Fr.
C	Antonio Foster*	Sr.	Converted guard started last seven games at center.	Michael Stannard, So.
RG	Micah Simmons	So.	Started three late-season games at right guard.	Kevin McIntyre, Jr.
RT	Al Bond*	Jr.	Has 19 consecutive starts at position.	Christopher Roberson, Fr.
K	Jake Elliott	Fr.	Made 52-yard game-winning field goal in high school.	Andrew Diamond, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2012 stats: 138.0 ypg rushing (3rd in C-USA/32nd NCAA), 245.6 passing (6th/78th), 383.6 total defense (3rd/50th), 30.2 ppg (6th/79th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Corey Jones*	Sr.	Six tackles for loss, three QB hurries in 2012.	Melvin Jones, Jr.
DT	Kendrick Golden	Jr.	Appeared in 12 games with one start in '12.	Kewan Alfred, Jr.
NT	Terry Redden*	Jr.	Leader of defensive front, had 6.5 TFL last year.	Johnnie Farms, Sr.
DE	Martin Ifedi*	Jr.	Led team in TFL (11) and sacks (7.5).	Ricky Hunter, So.
LB	Anthony Brown*	Sr.	The Tigers' second-leading tackler last season.	Tank Jakes, Jr.
LB	Charles Harris*	Jr.	Led team with 79 tackles.	Leonard Pegues, So.
LB	Ryan Coleman	Jr.	JC transfer moved atop depth chart in spring.	Wynton McManis, So.
CB	Bakari Hollier	Jr.	Five career starts, including three as true freshman.	Andrew Gaines, Jr.
CB	Bobby McCain*	Jr.	All-league candidate and vocal leader.	Chris Morley, Fr.
SS	Reggis Ball	So.	Moves to secondary from outside linebacker.	Anthony Watson, Sr.
FS	Lonnie Ballentine*	Sr.	Led team with three INTs and 40 solo tackles.	Tavon Bolden, Sr.
P	Tom Hornsey*	Sr.	Averaged 43.4 yards per punt as a junior.	Andrew Diamond, Jr.

*Returning Starter

MIAMI HURRICANES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: James Coley | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mark D'Onofrio** | **SUN LIFE STADIUM: 74,916**

AT A GLANCE

2012 RECORD:
7-5, 5-3 ACC (T-1st, Coastal)

COACH:
Al Golden — At Miami: 13-11, 2 years; overall: 40-45, 7 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
14; 8 offense, 6 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Stephen Morris, RB Duke Johnson, WR Phillip Dorsett, OL Brandon Linder, OL Seantrel Henderson, DL Anthony Chickillo, LB Denzel Perryman

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The passing game, complemented by Johnson's threat to break long runs, gives Miami a potentially potent offense. A veteran offensive line will help in that regard, and the coaches will focus on a vertical attack.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Miami needs to solve its inability to pressure quarterbacks, which, in turn, puts a lot of pressure on defensive backs. The Canes averaged just 1.08 sacks per game last season, ranked 113th nationally. The place-kicking game is inexperienced.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Mike James, CB Brandon McGee, K Jake Wieclaw, P Dalton Botts

OVERVIEW:
Miami has a chance to return to national prominence in its second game when the Hurricanes play host to Florida. Win that and this could be a special season. But even with a loss, the Hurricanes should still challenge Florida State for the ACC title and automatic BCS berth. Back-to-back games at FSU and at home against Virginia Tech on Nov. 2 and Nov. 9 respectively will have a huge impact on the league season.

Hurricanes Have Sights on ACC Title

It's been about a decade since there was reason to be this excited about Miami.

Never have the Hurricanes won an ACC division or overall championship since joining in 2004. There was the 16-10 home loss to Virginia Tech in the regular-season finale that cost them a title in 2004, a 14-10 home loss to Georgia Tech that cost them the title the next year and a self-imposed ban, which didn't allow them to play Florida State for the ACC Championship last season.

In his third season, coach Al Golden has navigated the most difficult of situations — suspension of numerous players from the start of the 2011 season because of the Nevin Shapiro controversy, no postseason games in his first two seasons, and possible scholarship losses this summer.

When asked how his team compares to a year ago, Golden said, "It's not even close."

He said he didn't want his team thinking of itself as a Top 25 team, but he added, "That's the world we want to live in. We better want that."

OFFENSE

Miami averaged 31.4 points per game last season and is capable of quite a bit more.

In the final spring game, quarterback Stephen Morris shredded the defense — and he didn't have top receiver Phillip Dorsett or top tight end Clive Walford. Golden said he actually had to slow down the tempo in scrimmages so the Canes wouldn't hit their goal of 120 plays too fast.

Morris has evolved into a confident, poised leader who is comfortable being vocal with teammates.

"This is my last go-round, man," he said. "I'm taking in everything; reads, accuracy, feet.

"Every day, we have to grind and stay focused. Something special could happen to us."

Morris threw for 3,345 yards in 2012, with 21 touchdowns and just seven interceptions. He still needs to improve on his 58-percent accuracy.

Dorsett caught 58 passes for 842 yards and four touchdowns. Miami returns six of its top eight pass catchers.

Duke Johnson earned Freshman All-American honors after having more than 2,000 all-purpose yards. Projected starting offensive linemen Brandon Linder (29), Jon Feliciano (20), Seantrel Henderson (18), Malcolm Bunche (13) and Shane McDermott (12) have combined for 94 starts. With a big year, Henderson can become a first-round NFL pick.

Miami has a new offensive coordinator in James Coley, who realizes he doesn't have to reinvent the wheel with his talent. The Hurricanes pried him from Florida State when coach Jimbo Fisher still wanted to call plays.

"There's some players here with FBI — football intelligence," Coley said.

"The way I look at it, I want to take my best players week in, week out, and put them in formations where we can create mismatches. Take the personnel groupings and be creative."

One thing Miami needs is a more consistent offense that complements the defense. There were times last season the Hurricanes needed to stay on the field and give the defense a rest. They didn't do it, and it led to the Virginia loss and routs against Kansas State and Notre Dame.

DEFENSE

Miami's defense getting shredded was painful, especially when one thinks of all those past great Hurricanes' teams with guys like Ray Lewis, Jerome Brown, Warren Sapp, Benny Blades, Vince Wilfork and Sean Taylor.

Kansas State and Notre Dame ground Miami to a pulp. The Hurricanes looked

almost helpless as Virginia drove the field in the final minutes of a 41-40 win. Even Duke scored 45.

Miami ranked 82nd in scoring defense (30.5 points), 102nd in pass defense (268.5 yards), 112th in rushing defense (217.9 yards) and 116th in total defense (486.4 yards).

While the final spring scrimmage did little to allay concerns, defensive coordinator Mark D'Onofrio is confident better days are ahead. What helps back his feelings are:

Solid defensive efforts where Miami held South Florida, Virginia Tech and North Carolina to 9, 12 and 18 points last season.

His core players are stronger. D'Onofrio counted five players — defensive linemen Olsen Pierre, Shayon Green and Anthony Chickillo, and linebackers Denzel Perryman and Jimmy Gaines — who have added 20 pounds. What he now needs is to keep Perryman, defensive lineman Curtis Porter, and linebacker Raphael Kirby on the field. They missed a combined 16 games last season.

"As they get more experienced, their bodies are catching up and mentally, they put more time into the game and mature," D'Onofrio said. "Sometimes, confidence gets hurt by playing before you're ready. But they were forced to play."

Reinforcements are coming. D'Onofrio expects defensive linemen Devante Bond, Ufomba Kamalu and Al Quadin Muhammad to contribute immediately as pass rushers.

Pass rush is crucial. It's a big reason why the Hurricanes got so few interceptions (five) from their defensive backs. Last season, Miami managed only 13 sacks. Chickillo is capable of double digits himself, now that he's bulked up to 265.

Defensive backs Ladarius Gunter, Antonio Crawford, Kacy Rodgers II and Nate Dortch had good springs, according to their coach, but also will be pushed by some newcomers in the fall.

"I'm excited about the direction," D'Onofrio said. "It's a more mature and focused group, a fun group. Not every day is perfect, but they're driven to get better and they're learning how to get better."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Duke Johnson has returned pizzazz to Miami's kick returns. Last year, he averaged 33 yards per return and had two touchdowns.

The Hurricanes would be best to find a replacement for Phillip Dorsett as a punt returner. Maybe it'll be Malcolm Lewis, who made good progress in the offseason after suffering a horrific knee injury against Georgia Tech.

Miami made an important addition after spring ball, announcing the transfer of graduate student Pat O'Donnell from Cincinnati. The veteran punter averaged 41.8 yards last season and 42.6 yards in his Bearcats' career.

— Craig Handel

Duke Johnson
Photo by Tomasso DeRosa

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2012 stats: 144.8 ypg rushing (6th ACC/81st NCAA), 295.4 passing (3rd/25th), 440.2 total offense (5th/37th), 31.4 ppg (6th/49th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Stephen Morris*	Sr.	This is his team now.	Ryan Williams, Jr.
RB	Duke Johnson	So.	A year older, what else can he do?	Dallas Crawford, So.
WR	Allen Hurns*	Sr.	Should be a 50-catch guy.	Rashawn Scott, Jr.
WR	Phillip Dorsett*	Jr.	Could be ready for special season.	Herb Waters, So.
TE	Clive Walford	Jr.	Has flashed big-time potential.	Asante Cleveland, Sr.
LT	Malcolm Bunche*	Jr.	Is so solid that Henderson had to move to RT.	Ereck Flowers, So.
LG	Jon Feliciano*	Jr.	Has made 20 starts in two seasons.	Hunter Wells, So.
C	Shane McDermott*	Jr.	Missed spring ball.	Jared Wheeler, Sr.
RG	Brandon Linder*	Sr.	Has made 29 career starts.	Danny Isidora, Fr.
RT	Seantrel Henderson*	Sr.	Is he finally ready for an All-American season?	Sunny Odogwu, Fr.
K	Matt Goudis	So.	California kid hit a couple of kickoffs last year.	Ricky Perez, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2012 stats: 217.9 ypg rushing (12th ACC/112th NCAA), 268.5 passing (12th/102nd), 486.4 total defense (12th/116th), 30.5 ppg (10th/82nd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Anthony Chickillo*	Jr.	Looks like a breakout season is coming.	Jalen Grimble, Jr.
DT	Curtis Porter	Sr.	Has been bothered by injuries in career.	Earl Moore, So.
DT	Olsen Pierre*	Jr.	Additional weight will help him hold up better.	Corey King, So.
DE	Shayon Green*	Sr.	Was the team's top tackler in 2012 with 67.	Dyron Dye, Sr.
LB	Alex Figueroa	Fr.	He keeps impressing coaches.	Tyriq McCord, So.
LB	Jimmy Gaines*	Sr.	His experience is needed.	Raphael Kirby, So.
LB	Denzel Perryman*	Jr.	Has the ability to be an All-American.	Tyrone Cornileus, Sr.
CB	Ladarius Gunter	Jr.	A transfer from Fort Scott CC.	Larry Hope, Fr.
CB	Tracy Howard	So.	Had 17 tackles and four passes defended in 2012.	Nate Dortch, Fr.
SS	Rayshawn Jenkins	So.	Made two starts as a true freshman.	Nantambu Fentress, Jr.
FS	A.J. Highsmith*	Sr.	Converted QB adds experience in secondary.	Deon Bush, So.
P	Pat O'Donnell	Sr.	Transfer from Cincinnati replaces Dalton Botts.	Matt Goudis, So.

*Returning Starter

SOUTH FLORIDA | BULLS

AAC rank: 8 Record: 3-9 Big East: 1-6 (8th) Stadium: Raymond James (65,857)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Tomasso DeRosa

"I can't say nothing about last year because that's got nothing to do with this year."
— Senior LB DeDe Lattimore

BULLS at a GLANCE

COACH: Willie Taggart — At USF: 1st year and overall: 16-20, 3 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Walt Wells
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chuck Bresnahan

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: None
LAST BOWL: 2010, Meineke Car Care
RETURNING STARTERS: 11; 4 offense, 7 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Marcus Shaw, WR Andre Davis, DE Tevin Mims, DE Aaron Lynch, DT Luke Sager, LB DeDe Lattimore, S JaQuez Jenkins

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The Bulls are strong up front defensively, especially with Lynch's arrival from Notre Dame giving the Bulls a legitimate four-man rotation at end. There also is experience at linebacker and safety. Shaw and junior Michael Pierre are a solid 1-2 punch at running back, and Davis is a proven receiver.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The offense faces a major rebuilding job with the key issue at quarterback, which may not be settled until late in fall camp. The defense returns seven starters, but the losses are all big ones in linebacker Sam Barrington (251 career tackles), defensive tackle Cory Grissom, and cornerbacks Kayvon Webster and George Baker.

OFFENSE

The Bulls face a major overhaul, not just in personnel, but in approach.

New coach Willie Taggart emphasized the running game in his previous stop, getting huge production out of running backs Bobby Rainey and Antonio Andrews during his three years at Western Kentucky.

During that time, the Bulls were relying mostly on their quarterback, B.J. Daniels, to carry the load passing and rushing. Daniels is gone, along with the top two running backs, Demetris Murray and Lindsey Lamar.

Senior Marcus Shaw, who has battled injuries throughout his career, is the most experienced running back. His career totals are 83 carries for 391 yards. Junior college transfer Mike Pierre, who redshirted in 2012, also is in the picture after a solid spring.

The quarterback position won't be settled until late in fall camp. Senior Bobby Eveld made one brief appearance last year. Sophomore Matt Floyd didn't distinguish himself after Daniels went out injured late in the season.

Wide receiver Andre Davis returns after leading the Bulls with 46 catches for 534 yards in 2012. Junior Deonte Welch and sophomore D'Vario Montgomery have potential. Tight end Sean Price finished well as a freshman with 21 receptions over the last half of the year.

DEFENSE

The defense is much more settled than the offense, although questions remain in the secondary.

Seniors Mark Joyce and JaQuez Jenkins are returning starters at safety, but sophomore Kenneth Durden, senior Josh Brown and senior Brandon Salinas are inexperienced on the corners.

At linebacker, DeDe Lattimore is going into his fourth season as a starter and anchors the middle. He has 13 career sacks. Junior Reshard Cliett started six of the last eight games in 2012. Sophomore Zack Bullock emerged from the spring No. 1 on the depth chart on the strong side. Tashon Whitehurst, who had one start as a freshman, will challenge Bullock in the fall.

The Bulls' cup overflows at end where Notre Dame transfer Aaron Lynch joins Tevin Mims (11 starts), Ryne Giddins (seven starts in 2012, 21 career) and Julius Forte in the rotation.

Luke Sager, who started all 12 games, and Elkino Watson, who has 16 tackles for loss in 24 career appearances, man the tackle spots.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Bulls will be looking for two new kickers. Junior Marvin Kloss handled kickoff duties in the past two years and is the leading candidate to take over field goals and PATs from the reliable Maikon Bonani.

Sophomore Mattias Ciabatti, who punted once last year (43 yards), is the No. 1 candidate for the punting job going into the fall.

OVERVIEW

The defense may be able to keep the Bulls in most games, but the issue is whether the offense can get them over the hump. Of their 21 losses over the last three years, 14 were by 10 points or less. There may not be enough firepower to turn those into victories.

TOP NEWCOMER

DE Aaron Lynch: Lynch sat out last year after transferring from Notre Dame. He started six games as a true freshman for the Irish in 2011 and recorded a team-high 5.5 sacks along with 14 quarterback hurries.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	13	Bobby Eveld	6-5	217	Sr.
RB	20	Marcus Shaw	5-9	178	Sr.
FB	11	Ryan Eppes	6-1	236	Sr.
WR	**81**	**Andre Davis***	**6-1**	**202**	**Jr.**
WR	83	Deonte Welch	6-0	206	Jr.
TE	12	Sean Price	6-3	249	So.
LT	**76**	**Darrell Williams***	**6-5**	**287**	**Jr.**
LG	66	Brynjar Gudmundsson	6-4	305	So.
C	**78**	**Austin Reiter***	**6-3**	**273**	**Jr.**
RG	64	Thor Jozwiak	6-4	300	So.
RT	**70**	**Quinterrius Eatmon***	**6-6**	**311**	**Jr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	19	Aaron Lynch	6-6	244	So.
DT	**92**	**Luke Sager***	**6-3**	**275**	**Sr.**
DT	53	Elkino Watson	6-2	286	Jr.
DE	**99**	**Tevin Mims***	**6-3**	**246**	**Sr.**
LB	**16**	**Reshard Cliett***	**6-2**	**220**	**Jr.**
LB	**34**	**DeDe Lattimore***	**6-1**	**237**	**Sr.**
LB	52	Zack Bullock	6-3	213	So.
CB	23	Kenneth Durden	6-0	173	So.
CB	31	Brandon Salinas	5-11	170	Sr.
SS	**3**	**JaQuez Jenkins***	**6-2**	**190**	**Sr.**
FS	**26**	**Mark Joyce***	**5-10**	**195**	**Sr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	27	Marvin Kloss	6-0	198	Jr.
P	49	Mattias Ciabbatti	6-0	184	So.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	McNEESE STATE
Sept. 7	at Michigan State
Sept. 14	FAU
Sept. 28	MIAMI
Oct. 5	CINCINNATI
Oct. 12	at Connecticut
Oct. 26	LOUISVILLE
Oct. 31	at Houston
Nov. 16	MEMPHIS
Nov. 23	SMU
Nov. 29	at UCF
Dec. 7	at Rutgers

2012 RESULTS

W	CHATTANOOGA	34-13
W	at Nevada	32-31
L	RUTGERS	13-23
L	at Ball State	27-31
L	FLORIDA STATE	17-30
L	at Temple	28-37
L	at Louisville	25-27
L	SYRACUSE	36-37
W	CONNECTICUT	13-6
L	at Miami	9-40
L	at Cincinnati	10-27
L	PITTSBURGH	3-27

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.6	104
Rushing	152.0	66
Passing	215.5	78
Total	367.5	89
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	27.4	57
Rushing	149.9	50
Passing	251.9	88
Total	401.8	65
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-19	-1.58	118

SEC YEAR IN REVIEW

THE RACE

The key game in the West was, once again, Alabama-LSU. The teams met on Nov. 3 in Baton Rouge, with the fifth-ranked Tigers rallying to take a 17-14 lead early in the fourth quarter and pushing the No. 1 Tide to the ropes with only a couple of minutes left.

But LSU missed a 45-yard field goal with 1:34 to go, and that was AJ McCarron's cue. The Alabama quarterback efficiently led the Tide down field, connecting three times with Kevin Norwood, before freshman running back T.J. Yeldon did the rest, taking a swing pass and weaving into the end zone for a 21-17 lead.

Alabama moved two games ahead of everyone in the West, so it was little harm done (in the league race) when Texas A&M and Johnny Manziel had a season-defining victory in Tuscaloosa a week later. Bama's 49-0 win against hapless rival Auburn two weeks later sealed the West.

In the East, South Carolina got a leg up by beating Georgia on Oct. 6 before squandering the advantage with back-to-back losses at Florida and at LSU. That set up a showdown between the 12th-ranked Dawgs and the undefeated and No. 3 Gators in Jacksonville on Oct. 27.

Georgia's defense forced six turnovers and Todd Gurley carried 26 times for 118 yards, leading the Dawgs to a 17-9 win. Georgia, like Alabama would later, then clinch its division with a shutout of Auburn.

THE CHAMPION

Alabama, still hungry after winning it all in 2011, showed its domination on both sides of the line of scrimmage in the BCS Championship Game, burying Notre Dame, 42-14, in Miami.

The "real" national title game was the battle for the SEC crown ... and it was all hanging in the balance in the final seconds with Georgia marching. But when Chris Conley caught a deflected pass and fell at the Alabama 5, time ran out on the Dawgs.

Alabama's seniors, winners of three national titles in four years, went 49-5 in that span.

The Tide led the nation in rushing defense (76.4 yards per game), total defense (250.0) and scoring defense (10.9 points per game).

THE STARS

Offensive Player of the Year: Johnny Manziel, QB, Texas A&M

It was an unfathomable season. His numbers alone were stunning, especially against SEC defenses — a national-best 5,116 yards. Yeah, there was all that and lot of moxie, but it was the win at Alabama that really created the legend, as Johnny Football went on to win the Heisman as a freshman.

Defensive Player of the Year: Jarvis Jones, LB, Georgia

Jones led the nation in tackles for loss with 24.5 — one more than South Carolina's Jadeveon Clowney and Arizona State's Will Sutton. Jones' signature game came in the win over Florida — 13 tackles, including five for loss and three sacks. He also forced two Gator fumbles.

Coach of the Year: Kevin Sumlin, Texas A&M

He gave all appropriate freedom to Johnny Manziel in the offense, which led the SEC in all the major categories. The team's only losses were by three to Florida in the opener and by five to LSU as the Aggies emphatically announced their presence in their new league.

THE BOWLS

By the morning of New Year's Day, the SEC was not looking like its dominating self in the postseason, sporting a 1-2 start. But then came some of the big-on-big contests, and teams like Michigan, Oklahoma, Nebraska ... and, yes, Notre Dame, felt the SEC's wrath. Florida and LSU came up on the short end of exciting games, but in the marquee games — of course led by the season-capping rout in the BCS Championship Game by Alabama — the league counted strong. The Crimson Tide's victory extended the SEC to a preposterous seven national championships in a row.

BCS Championship	**Alabama 42, Notre Dame 14**
Sugar	Louisville 33, **Florida 23**
Cotton	**Texas A&M 41,** Oklahoma 13
Outback	**South Carolina 33,** Michigan 28
Gator	Northwestern 34, **Mississippi State 20**
Capital One	**Georgia 45,** Nebraska 31
Chick-fil-A	Clemson 25, **LSU 24**
BBVA Compass	**Ole Miss 38,** Pittsburgh 17
Music City	**Vanderbilt 38,** NC State 24

ALL-SEC TEAM

*as selected by the league coaches

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	Johnny Manziel	Texas A&M
RB	Mike Gillislee	Florida
RB	Eddie Lacy	Alabama
TE	Mychal Rivera	Tennessee
WR	Cobi Hamilton	Arkansas
WR	Jordan Matthews	Vanderbilt
C	Barrett Jones	Alabama
OL	Luke Joeckel	Texas A&M
OL	Chance Warmack	Alabama
OL	D.J. Fluker	Alabama
OL	Jake Matthews	Texas A&M
AP	Cordarrelle Patterson	Tennessee
PK	Caleb Sturgis	Florida
RS	Ace Sanders	South Carolina

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	AJ McCarron	Alabama
RB	Zac Stacy	Vanderbilt
RB	Todd Gurley	Georgia
WR	Ryan Swope	Texas A&M
WR	Justin Hunter	Tennessee
TE	Jordan Reed	Florida
C	T.J. Johnson	South Carolina
OL	Larry Warford	Kentucky
OL	Gabe Jackson	Mississippi State
OL	Chris Burnette	Georgia
OL	Dallas Thomas	Tennessee
AP	Ace Sanders	South Carolina
PK	Drew Alleman	LSU
RS	Cordarrelle Patterson	Tennessee

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Jadeveon Clowney	South Carolina
DL	Sam Montgomery	LSU
DL	Damontre Moore	Texas A&M
DL	Sharrif Floyd	Florida
LB	C.J. Mosley	Alabama
LB	Kevin Minter	LSU
LB	Jarvis Jones	Georgia
DB	Dee Milliner	Alabama
DB	Matt Elam	Florida
DB	Eric Reid	LSU
DB	Johnthan Banks	Mississippi State
P	Kyle Christy	Florida

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Barkevious Mingo	LSU
DL	Sheldon Richardson	Missouri
DL	John Jenkins	Georgia
DL	Corey Lemonier	Auburn
LB	A.J. Johnson	Tennessee
LB	Jon Bostic	Florida
LB	Cameron Lawrence	Mississippi State
LB	Alec Ogletree	Georgia
DB	D.J. Swearinger	South Carolina
DB	Bacarri Rambo	Georgia
DB	Robert Lester	Alabama
DB	Darius Slay	Mississippi State
P	Dylan Breeding	Arkansas
P	Richard Kent	Vanderbilt

THE STANDINGS

EASTERN

Team	W-L	PCT.	PF	PA	W-L	PCT	PF	PA
Georgia	7-1	.875	268	145	12-2	.857	529	275
Florida	7-1	.875	207	95	11-2	.846	344	188
South Carolina	6-2	.750	229	169	11-2	.846	410	237
Vanderbilt	5-3	.625	177	168	9-4	.692	390	243
Missouri	2-6	.250	175	264	5-7	.417	309	341
Tennessee	1-7	.125	246	320	5-7	.417	434	428
Kentucky	0-8	.000	89	291	2-10	.167	215	372

WESTERN

Team	W-L	PCT.	PF	PA	W-L	PCT	PF	PA
Alabama	7-1	.875	303	90	13-1	.929	542	153
LSU	6-2	.750	180	150	10-3	.769	387	228
Texas A&M	6-2	.750	313	168	11-2	.846	578	283
Mississippi State	4-4	.500	202	223	8-5	.615	383	303
Ole Miss	3-5	.375	224	239	7-6	.538	409	359
Arkansas	2-6	.250	157	257	4-8	.333	282	365
Auburn	0-8	.000	81	272	3-9	.250	224	340

PICKING **THE SUN BELT**

Amid Change, Sun Belt Confident Top of League Remains Strong

The seismic shifts that have shaken up the college football world — with teams well-established in their conferences moving on to perceived greener pastures — have trickled down to the Sun Belt Conference.

The conference lost four members in the last year and added two new ones to create an eight-team league for 2013.

Georgia State and Texas State will replace Florida Atlantic, Florida International, Middle Tennessee and North Texas, which have moved on to Conference USA.

But the changes aren't stopping there.

Western Kentucky already has announced this will be the its final season in the Sun Belt as it, too, is moving to C-USA for 2014. But Appalachian State, Georgia Southern, Idaho and New Mexico State will be coming aboard.

"We're certainly in flux right now," says one veteran league coach. "I'm not going to try to paint a pretty picture necessarily because I don't know that it is pretty."

There is some irony in the timing of the defections as the league's product on the field is arguably at its highest point. In the past three years, the league has sent 10 teams to bowls, half of them coming away with postseason wins.

And last season Louisiana-Monroe and Middle Tennessee got national attention by notching victories over teams from BCS automatic qualifying conferences, Arkansas (SEC) and Georgia Tech (ACC), respectively. Louisiana nearly came away with a third before falling 27-20 at SEC power Florida.

"Those were pretty significant deals," the coach said.

But if the membership has undergone a radical change, the Sun Belt standings will have a familiar look in 2013. The same teams that contended for the 2012 title (less Middle Tennessee) will be back at it again this fall.

Despite the loss of two-time Player of the Year quarterback Ryan Aplin, Arkansas State, 15-1 in conference play over the past two years, looks primed to make a run for a third straight league title.

Louisiana-Monroe loses only a couple of starters from the first bowl team in school history, and Louisiana, 12-4 in the league the last two years, will be hard to stop offensively.

Western Kentucky, coming off a bowl game and just three years removed from a winless season, has a new coach known for his offensive success. You may have heard of him — Bobby Petrino, most recently of Arkansas.

Of the remaining four teams, Troy, which won outright or shared five consecutive titles until slumping in 2011, has the best chance of getting into the upper half of the standings.

— Paul Borden

Sun Belt Conference Picks

	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. LA-Monroe	The Warhawks return a veteran team with a four-year starting QB leading the way.	They must avoid the health issues that have cost them the last two seasons.	Getting Arkansas State and Western Kentucky at home will help the Warhawks.
2. Arkansas State	The Red Wolves are solid with veterans spread throughout the two-deep.	QB Ryan Aplin is gone after running the show for four years.	Despite the loss of Aplin, ASU has the goods to challenge for the title.
3. Louisiana	QB Terrance Broadway leads what could be the league's best running attack.	There are issues in the secondary and with depth at wide receiver.	The Warhawks could compete for a bowl spot if they have the answers on defense.
4. Western Kentucky	Hilltoppers have two of the SBC's best in RB Antonio Andrews and LB Andrew Jackson.	An inexperienced front may make them vulnerable against the run.	Solid play at QB could lead to a title in the Hilltoppers' last season in the Sun Belt.
5. Troy	The offense has the potential to be as explosive as it was in 2012.	Only five starters return to a defense that was at the bottom of the Sun Belt last year.	The challenge of having to win shootouts will keep Trojans from making move up.
6. Texas State	New additions will bolster a defense that had problems stopping the run in 2012.	The Bobcats are unsettled at quarterback and could end up starting a freshman.	A top-half finish may be asking a bit much in Bobcats' first Sun Belt season.
7. So. Alabama	The Jaguars looked better on both sides of the ball in spring, especially on offense.	Lots of new faces in the secondary will have to come through to solidify the defense.	With its schedule, asking for more than three or four wins is a stretch.
8. Georgia State	The Panthers return a bunch of starters, including at QB and entire offensive line.	Those starters are from a team that won only once against mostly FCS competition.	With fellow new member Texas State on the road, it's hard to find a conference win.

Lindy's 2013 ALL-Sun Belt Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM

QB	Kolton Browning	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
RB	David Oku	Sr.	Arkansas State
RB	Antonio Andrews	Sr.	Western Kentucky
WR	J.D. McKissic	So.	Arkansas State
WR	Je'Ron Hamm	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
TE	Wes Saxton	Jr.	South Alabama
C	Josh Allen	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
OL	Joseph Treadwell	Jr.	Louisiana-Monroe
OL	Aaron Williams	Sr.	Arkansas State
OL	Daniel Quave	Jr.	Louisiana
OL	Cameron Clemmons	Jr.	Western Kentucky
AP	Darryl Surgent	Sr.	Louisiana-Lafayette
K	Brian Davis	Sr.	Arkansas State

DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM

DL	Ryan Carrethers	Sr.	Arkansas State
DL	Alex Page	Sr.	South Alabama
DL	D.J. Yendrey	Sr.	Texas State
DL	Christian Ringo	Jr.	Louisiana
LB	Andrew Jackson	Sr.	Western Kentucky
LB	Qushaun Lee	Jr.	Arkansas State
LB	Cameron Blakes	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
DB	Craig Mager	Jr.	Texas State
DB	Rocky Hayes	So.	Arkansas State
DB	Jonathan Dowling	Jr.	Western Kentucky
DB	Isaiah Newsome	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
P	Matt Hubbard	Jr.	Georgia State

OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM

QB	Terrance Broadway	Jr.	Louisiana
RB	Alonzo Harris	Jr.	Louisiana
RB	Jyruss Edwards	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
WR	Eric Thomas	Sr.	Troy
WR	Jeremé Jones	Jr.	South Alabama
TE	Ian Thompson	Sr.	Louisiana
C	Andre Huval	Sr.	Louisiana
OL	Terrence Jones	Jr.	Troy
OL	Charlie Will Tuttle	Jr.	Texas State
OL	Melvin Meggs	Jr.	South Alabama
OL	Mykhael Quave	So.	Louisiana
AP	T.J. Glover	Jr.	South Alabama
K	Will Johnson	Jr.	Texas State

DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM

DL	Lonnie Gosha	So.	Troy
DL	Kentarius Caldwell	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
DL	Blake McColloch	Sr.	Texas State
DL	Amos Draper	Sr.	Arkansas State
LB	Enrique Williams	Sr.	South Alabama
LB	Michael Orakpo	Jr.	Texas State
LB	Justin Anderson	Sr.	Louisiana
DB	Vincent Eddie	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
DB	Chris Pickett	Sr.	Troy
DB	Rodney Gillis	Sr.	Louisiana
DB	Camren Hudson	Sr.	Troy
P	Hendrix Brakefield	Sr.	Western Kentucky

THE BIG ONES

Aug. 31	Louisiana at Arkansas
Aug. 31	Kentucky vs. W. Kentucky (Nashville, TN)
Aug. 31	Louisiana-Monroe at Oklahoma
Sept. 7	Arkansas State at Auburn
Sept. 12	Troy at Arkansas State
Sept. 14	Louisiana-Monroe at Wake Forest
Sept. 21	Louisiana-Monroe at Baylor
Oct. 3	Western Kentucky at Louisiana-Monroe
Oct. 15	Louisiana at Western Kentucky
Oct. 22	Louisiana at Arkansas State
Oct. 26	Troy at Western Kentucky
Oct. 31	Louisiana-Monroe at Troy
Nov. 9	Arkansas State at Louisiana-Monroe
Nov. 30	Arkansas State at Western Kentucky
Nov. 30	Louisiana-Monroe at Louisiana

BOWL CONNECTIONS

Sun Belt #1/2
Sun Belt Champion
New Orleans Bowl vs.
Conference USA

Sun Belt #1/2
GoDaddy.com Bowl vs. MAC

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Andrew Jackson	LB	Sr.	Western Kentucky	Can dominate as an inside backer.
2. Ryan Carrethers	DT	Sr.	Arkansas State	A solid run-stopper in the middle.
3. Josh Allen	C	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe	Has good size and speed.
4. Antonio Andrews	RB	Sr.	Western Kentucky	Strong runner also skilled as a kick returner.
5. Je'Ron Hamm	WR	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe	Had a breakout season (62 catches) as a junior.
6. D.J. Yendrey	DT	Sr.	Texas State	His pass-rushing skills a big plus.
7. David Oku	RB	Sr.	Arkansas State	Thrived after transferring from Tennessee.
8. Aaron Williams	OT	Sr.	Arkansas State	Have to like his 6-5, 324-pound frame.
9. Isaiah Newsome	DB	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe	Has the knack for getting to the football.
10. Eric Thomas	WR	Sr.	Troy	Sure-handed, but only average size (6-1, 209)

Most Valuable Player	Offensive Player of the Year	Defensive Player of the Year	Newcomer of the Year
Kolton Browning, QB, LA-Monroe	Antonio Andrews, RB, Western Kentucky	Andrew Jackson, LB, Western Kentucky	D.J. Yendrey, DT, Texas State

HONOR ROLL

Most Accurate Passer	Corey Robinson	Troy
Strongest Arm	Kolton Browning	Louisiana-Monroe
Best Scrambler	Terrance Broadway	Louisiana
Coolest in Clutch	Kolton Browning	Louisiana-Monroe
Toughest to Bring Down	Antonio Andrews	Western Kentucky
Best Hands	Je'Ron Hamm	Louisiana-Monroe
Most Dangerous Deep Threat	Eric Thomas	Troy
Best Pass Blocker	Aaron Williams	Arkansas State
Best Pass Rusher	Christian Ringo	Louisiana
Best Cover Corner	Isaiah Newsome	Louisiana-Monroe
Special Teams Demon	Antonio Andrews	Western Kentucky

ARKANSAS STATE | RED WOLVES

Sun Belt rank: 2 **Record: 10-3** **Sun Belt record: 7-1 (1st)** **Stadium: Liberty Bank Stadium (30,708)**

By Paul Borden

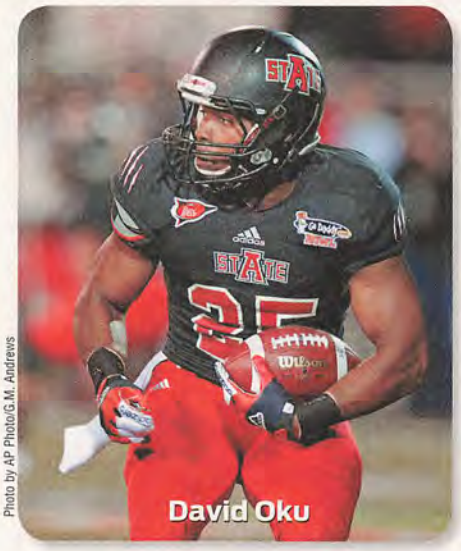


Photo by AP Photo/G.M. Andrews

"All our quarterbacks are doing some things really well, but we still have a long way to go."
— Coach Bryan Harsin

RED WOLVES at a GLANCE

COACH: Bryan Harsin — At Arkansas State and overall: 1st year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Eliah Drinkwitz, Bush Hamdan
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Thompson

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2012
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2010
RETURNING STARTERS: 13; 7 offense, 5 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB David Oku, WR J.D. McKissic, WR Allen Muse, DE Eddie Porter, DT Ryan Carrethers, LB Qushaun Lee, CB Rocky Hayes, K Brian Davis

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The offense has an all-conference performer at running back in Oku, depth at wide receiver, and four returning starters on the line. That should help ease breaking in a new quarterback. The defense is solid up front. Carrethers is a potential Defensive Player of the Year candidate.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Red Wolves will be playing for their fourth coach in four seasons with Harsin taking over for Gus Malzahn, who stayed only one year after succeeding Hugh Freeze, who grabbed the reins from Steve Roberts. Replacing the production of four-year starting quarterback Ryan Aplin is going to be the key issue on offense.

OFFENSE

With two-time Sun Belt Offensive Player of the Year Ryan Aplin gone, the No. 1 priority on offense is obvious: Find a quarterback.

The Red Wolves came out of spring with no candidate standing out, and the competition looks to go deep into fall camp.

The contenders are senior Phillip Butterfield, who has missed two seasons with injuries and appeared in only one game last year; sophomore Stephen Hogan, who had a good all-around spring; and junior college transfer Chandler Rogers, who also had some promising moments in the spring.

Incoming freshman Cameron Birse from Danville, Calif., also could be in the picture in the fall.

The Red Wolves are set at running back with senior David Oku, a first-team all-conference performer who rushed for 1,061 yards last season.

They also have a solid set of receivers headed by J.D. McKissic. McKissic earned Sun Belt Freshman of the Year honors after catching 103 passes for 1,022 yards, including 11 for 113 yards in the GoDaddy.com Bowl win over Kent State to earn offensive MVP honors for the game.

Allen Muse, who is on the verge of breaking into the Top 10 in several receiving categories in the school record book, also is back after sitting out last year to tend to personal matters.

Four starters, including an all-conference contender in sophomore center Bryce Giddens, are back up front.

DEFENSE

The Red Wolves have some work to do on defense, but the cupboard is not completely barren of talent.

Tackle Ryan Carrethers (first team) and linebacker Qushaun Lee (honorable mention) received Sun Belt recognition last year, and Lee was the bowl game's defensive MVP.

Safeties Sterling Young and Chris Humes and end Eddie Porter also are returning starters. Porter also played some linebacker and ended up second on the team in sacks (2.5).

The new starters do show promise, and, in some cases, aren't completely new.

End Chris Stone played in all 13 games as a redshirt freshman last year with five starts, including the bowl. Cornerback Artez Brown (five starts), cornerback Rocky Hayes (four), and tackle Amos Draper (three) also have starting experience.

Newcomers Jabari Mathieu, a junior college transfer, and Willie Fletcher, a redshirt freshman, could have an impact at end and corner, respectively.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Brian Davis was second-team All-Sun Belt in 2012, going 17 of 21 on field goals, and is 35 of 44 over the last two years.

Davis also could figure into the competition as punter, where sophomore Luke Ferguson goes into the fall as the likely successor to Neely Sullivent.

OVERVIEW

The Red Wolves have the makings of a third-straight bowl appearance and will contend for a third straight Sun Belt title as well. The key will be replacing Aplin for the offense. The defense looks to be stout again despite the loss of six starters.

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Willie Fletcher: A redshirt freshman from Carson, Calif., Fletcher will go into camp contending for a starting spot in the secondary. Even if he doesn't start, he will play a prominent role for the defense against all the spread offenses Sun Belt teams run.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	11	Phillip Butterfield	6-2	215	Sr.
RB	**25**	**David Oku***	**5-10**	**195**	**Sr.**
WR	**23**	**J.D. McKissic***	**5-10**	**185**	**So.**
WR	7	Julian Jones	6-0	190	Sr.
WR	17	Allen Muse	6-4	214	Sr.
TE	19	Darion Griswold	6-5	240	So.
LT	**67**	**Aaron Williams***	**6-5**	**324**	**Sr.**
LG	**60**	**Steven Haunga***	**6-2**	**313**	**Sr.**
C	**68**	**Bryce Giddens***	**6-0**	**265**	**So.**
RG	**63**	**Cliff Mitchell***	**6-5**	**305**	**Sr.**
RT	71	Steven Stevens	6-4	265	So.
DEFENSE					
DE	42	Chris Stone	6-3	245	So.
DT	97	Amos Draper	6-3	270	Sr.
DT	**98**	**Ryan Carrethers***	**6-2**	**310**	**Sr.**
DE	**37**	**Eddie Porter***	**6-3**	**235**	**Sr.**
LB	**48**	**Qushaun Lee***	**5-11**	**225**	**Jr.**
LB	41	LaAngelo Albright	5-11	205	Sr.
LB	12	Kyle Coleman	6-1	215	Jr.
CB	38	Rocky Hayes	5-11	177	So.
CB	10	Artez Brown	6-0	170	Jr.
SS	**29**	**Chris Humes***	**5-11**	**190**	**So.**
FS	**11**	**Sterling Young***	**6-2**	**182**	**Jr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**4**	**Brian Davis***	**5-11**	**160**	**Sr.**
P	99	Luke Ferguson	6-0	195	So.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF
Sept. 7	at Auburn
Sept. 12	TROY
Sept. 21	at Memphis
Sept. 28	at Missouri
Oct. 12	IDAHO
Oct. 22	LOUISIANA
Nov. 2	at South Alabama
Nov. 9	at ULM
Nov. 16	TEXAS STATE
Nov. 23	GEORGIA STATE
Nov. 30	at Western Kentucky

2012 RESULTS

L	at Oregon	34-57
W	MEMPHIS	33-28
L	at Nebraska	13-42
W	ALCORN STATE	56-0
L	WESTERN KENTUCKY	13-26
W	at FIU	34-20
W	SOUTH ALABAMA	36-29
W	at Louisiana	50-27
W	at North Texas	37-19
W	ULM	45-23
W	at Troy	41-34
W	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	45-0
	GoDaddy.com Bowl	
W	vs. Kent State	17-13

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	34.9	26
Rushing	206.2	23
Passing	260.5	43
Total	466.7	23
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.5	43
Rushing	156.4	58
Passing	227.3	53
Total	383.7	51
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 9	+ 0.69	23

GEORGIA STATE | PANTHERS

Sun Belt rank: 8 | Record: 1-10, FCS | Stadium: Georgia Dome (28,155)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Jeff Vest/Icon SMI

"We've got to have competition everywhere." — Coach Trent Miles

PANTHERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Trent Miles — At GSU: 1st year; overall: 20-36, 5 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeff Jagodzinski
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jesse Minter

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: None
LAST BOWL: None
RETURNING STARTERS: 16; 8 offense, 6 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: WR Albert Wilson, LT Ulrick John, DT Nermin Delic, DT Theo Agnew, P Matt Hubbard

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The receiving corps has depth, with fleet sophomore Avery Sweeting joining veterans Wilson and Danny Williams. The addition of Delic to go with Agnew will help firm up an interior defensive line that gave up more than 235 yards a game rushing last year.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The offensive line returns five starters, but also must make huge strides if the Panthers are to be competitive. They gave up 28 sacks last year. Junior college newcomers are going to have to play big roles for the Panthers to have any success.

OFFENSE

The Panthers return a slew of veterans on offense, including their starting quarterback and two of their top three receivers.

But those veterans averaged only 17.4 points and 313.9 yards a game, and managed only one win last season against a schedule filled mostly with FCS opponents.

Throw in a coaching change, with Trent Miles coming from Indiana State to take over for Bill Curry, and an influx of junior college transfers, and it's pretty much assured many of those returning starters are going to be facing challenges this fall.

One of them is quarterback Ben McLane. He started nine games as a redshirt freshman, but he threw more interceptions (11) than touchdown passes (10) while completing barely half his attempts (139 of 274).

McLane looks to have kept his job coming out of spring after holding off fellow sophomores Ronnie Bell and Clay Chastain, who spent last fall at Georgia Military College. But the competition will resume in the fall.

Bell was 34 of 67 passing last year. Chastain had 20 touchdown passes against seven picks in nine games at Georgia Military.

There's competition at running back, too, where junior college transfer Gerald Howse (Northwest Oklahoma A&M) is challenging last year's backup, senior Travis Evans.

The Panthers' top offensive threat is wide receiver Albert Wilson, who had 48 catches for 947 yards and seven TDs last season. The senior also returns punts (9.4 average) and kickoffs (25.9).

DEFENSE

Although the Panthers return up to 11 players with at least one start, this is a group that gave up 38.5 points and 470.1 yards a game.

So it won't be surprising to find some of the returning starters in backup roles, especially as some of the newcomers, like defensive tackle George Rogers, a 6-3, 310-pound transfer from Northeast Oklahoma, work their way in.

Kentucky transfer Nermin Delic also is a nice addition up front, but he hasn't played for two years because of injury and NCAA transfer rules.

There is some experience at linebacker, where sophomore Joseph Peterson started seven games and senior Robert Ferguson four in 2012.

In the secondary, senior cornerbacks Demarius Matthews and Brent McClendon are returning starters, and senior Kail Singleton started five games at safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore Wil Lutz, who made four of seven field goals, returns as the primary kicker, though junior Matt Ehasz (two of five) also is back.

Junior punter Matt Hubbard is a legitimate all-conference contender after averaging 43.1 yards on 59 punts last year. He had 21 punts of more than 50 yards, with a long of 80.

OVERVIEW

Much would have to fall right for the Panthers to avoid a last-place finish in their first year in the Sun Belt. The offense must cut down on turnovers (35 in 11 games) and the defense must make huge strides for them to even get close to being competitive.

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Nermin Delic: A transfer from Kentucky, Delic will give the Panthers a much-needed boost up front. He played eight games as a true freshman in 2010 at Kentucky and was credited with five tackles, among them a sack that caused a fumble. But he hasn't played since then, after missing 2011 to injury and last year with his transfer.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**16**	**Ben McLane***	**6-1**	**210**	**So.**
RB	21	Travis Evans	5-11	190	Sr.
FB	47	Sean Jeppesen	6-0	215	Jr.
WR	**2**	**Albert Wilson***	**5-9**	**195**	**Sr.**
WR	**17**	**Danny Williams***	**6-4**	**200**	**Sr.**
TE	89	Drew Pearson	6-5	235	Jr.
LT	**56**	**Ulrick John***	**6-8**	**290**	**Sr.**
LG	**50**	**Tim Wynn***	**6-2**	**280**	**Jr.**
C	**68**	**Michael Davis***	**6-3**	**295**	**Sr.**
RG	**72**	**Harrison Clottey***	**6-5**	**310**	**Sr.**
RT	**79**	**Grant King***	**6-5**	**295**	**Sr.**

DEFENSE

DE	**95**	**John Kelly***	**6-5**	**240**	**Sr.**
DT	**92**	**Theo Agnew***	**6-4**	**260**	**Sr.**
NG	**75**	**Terrance Woodard***	**6-5**	**320**	**Sr.**
DT	91	Nermin Delic	6-4	260	Jr.
LB	3	Tarris Batiste	6-2	210	So.
LB	10	Robert Ferguson	6-1	230	Sr.
LB	**44**	**Joseph Peterson***	**6-0**	**210**	**So.**
CB	**5**	**Demarius Matthews***	**5-10**	**165**	**Sr.**
CB	**9**	**Brent McClendon***	**5-9**	**175**	**Sr.**
SS	12	Arington Jordan	5-11	193	Sr.
FS	24	Kail Singleton	6-2	203	Sr.

SPECIAL TEAMS

K	**13**	**Wil Lutz***	**6-0**	**190**	**So.**
P	**49**	**Matt Hubbard***	**6-4**	**230**	**Jr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	SAMFORD
Sept. 7	CHATTANOOGA
Sept. 14	at West Virginia
Sept. 21	JACKSONVILLE STATE
Oct. 5	at Alabama
Oct. 12	TROY
Oct. 19	at Texas State
Oct. 26	at ULM
Nov. 2	WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 16	LOUISIANA
Nov. 23	at Arkansas State
Nov. 30	SOUTH ALABAMA

2012 RESULTS

L	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	6 - 33
L	at Tennessee	13 - 51
L	UTSA	14 - 38
L	RICHMOND	14 - 35
L	at William & Mary	3 - 35
L	NEW HAMPSHIRE	21 - 44
W	at Rhode Island	41 - 7
L	VILLANOVA	24 - 49
L	at James Madison	21 - 28
L	OLD DOMINION	27 - 53
L	at Maine	7 - 51

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	17.4	N/A
Rushing	110.5	N/A
Passing	203.4	N/A
Total	313.9	N/A

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	38.5	N/A
Rushing	235.5	N/A
Pass	234.6	N/A
Total	470.1	N/A

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
- 20	- 1.8	N/A

LOUISIANA | RAGIN' CAJUNS

Sun Belt rank: 3 | Record: 9-4 | Sun Belt record: 6-2 (T-2nd) | Stadium: Cajun Field (31,000)

By Paul Borden

Terrance Broadway

Photo by Derick E. Hingle-US PRESSWIRE

"Our guys have come back eager to achieve even better things this fall."
— Coach Mark Hudspeth

RAGIN' CAJUNS at a GLANCE

COACH: Mark Hudspeth — At Louisiana: 18-8, 2 years; overall: 84-29, 9 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Johnson
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: James Willis

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1994, Big West
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2010
RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 7 offense, 5 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Terrance Broadway, RB Alonzo Harris, WR Darryl Surgent, C Andre Huval, DE Christian Ringo, LB Justin Anderson

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Broadway, Harris and Surgent give the Cajuns striking capability on offense. Three starters also are back up front. The defensive line has talent and depth and should be the strength of the unit. Anderson is the anchor in the middle at linebacker.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The secondary is undergoing a complete overhaul, and with several competitors not able to go through spring practice, that's an issue that could last through the first month of the season. Wide receiver is thin on experience.

OFFENSE

The Ragin' Cajuns have two massive holes to fill up front with the departures of tackles Leonardo Bates and Jaron Odom.

They solved one problem by shifting Mykhael Quave from guard to tackle on the left side and slotting junior Terry Johnson into Quave's old position, where he can operate between Quave and veteran center Andre Huval.

But who takes over Odom's right tackle spot won't be decided until fall camp, when sophomore Octravian Anderson and junior Jarad Martin resume their competition.

With Quave's older brother Daniel returning as a starter at right guard, the Cajuns look to have plenty of protection for quarterback Terrance Broadway.

Broadway, who threw for 219.0 yards a game in completing 65.4 percent of his pass attempts, will be missing his top two targets (Harry Peoples and Javone Lawson) but still has speedy veteran Darryl Surgent (34 catches, 569 yards) at slot receiver.

Running back Alonzo Harris (881 yards, 10 rushing touchdowns) leads the ground attack. Broadway also figures to play a big role in that facet of the offense after rushing for 769 yards and nine scores last year.

DEFENSE

The Cajuns are switching from a 3-4 scheme to a 4-3 under new coordinator James Willis and look to have a stout front seven despite the loss of four starters — two on the line and two at linebacker.

End Christian Ringo (10.5 tackles for loss, 7.0 sacks) and tackle Justin Hamilton (8.0, 3.0) are returning starters up front, and leading tackler Justin Anderson (105 stops) returns at linebacker.

Senior tackle Brandon McCray and sophomore end Chris Prater are likely starters at the other two spots along the line, but a pair of redshirt freshmen, Karmichael Dunbar and Blain Winston, also are in the picture. Dunbar is the son of Karl Dunbar, a former All-SEC lineman at LSU and currently an assistant coach for the New York Jets.

With the loss of veteran corners Jemarious Moten and Melvin White, the secondary has issues. But the Cajuns did get good news in the spring when safety Rodney Gillis, who had indicated he wasn't going to return in 2013, decided to apply for a medical redshirt and sixth season of eligibility. The NCAA was expected to grant a waiver because he missed two seasons due to knee injuries.

SPECIAL TEAMS

With the departure of Brett Baer, who was first-team All-Sun Belt as a kicker and punter, both kicking jobs are open. Sophomore Stephen Brauchle, who had a couple of field goals of 50 yards-plus in spring scrimmages, will handle that job.

Junior Daniel Cadona, an Australian with experience kicking in soccer and Australian rules football, has huge potential as the punter.

OVERVIEW

The Cajuns have all the ingredients for a legitimate run at the Sun Belt title. They should make a bowl game for a third consecutive season after ending a 41-year postseason drought in 2011.

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Corey Trim: A junior college transfer out of Jones County College in Mississippi, Trim (5-11 180) could be a difference-maker in the rebuilt secondary. He did not go through spring drills, but with his experience should adapt quickly when fall camp opens.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**8**	**Terrance Broadway***	**6-2**	**205**	**Jr.**
RB	**46**	**Alonzo Harris***	**6-1**	**220**	**Jr.**
WR	**87**	**Darryl Surgent***	**6-0**	**195**	**Sr.**
WR	15	Jamal Robinson	6-4	205	Jr.
WR	11	James Butler	6-2	205	Jr.
TE	**85**	**Ian Thompson***	**6-4**	**234**	**Sr.**
LT	**70**	**Mykhael Quave***	**6-5**	**300**	**So.**
LG	75	Terry Johnson	6-2	285	Jr.
C	**71**	**Andre Huval***	**6-1**	**290**	**Sr.**
RG	**67**	**Daniel Quave***	**6-3**	**324**	**Jr.**
RT	68	Octravian Anderson	6-4	280	So.
DEFENSE					
DE	57	Chris Prater	6-5	260	So.
DT	**96**	**Brandon McCray***	**6-5**	**300**	**Sr.**
DT	**74**	**Justin Hamilton***	**6-3**	**330**	**Jr.**
DE	**92**	**Christian Ringo***	**6-1**	**285**	**Jr.**
LB	75	Trae Johnson	6-2	225	Jr.
LB	**34**	**Justin Anderson***	**6-2**	**220**	**Sr.**
LB	39	Christian Hill	5-11	200	So.
CB	18	Jevante Watson	5-10	175	So.
CB	33	Trevence Patt	6-0	185	Jr.
SS	27	T.J. Worthy	6-2	190	So.
FS	**21**	**Rodney Gillis***	**5-11**	**186**	**Sr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	38	Stephen Brauchle	6-1	205	So.
P	13	Daniel Cadona	6-4	203	Jr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	at Arkansas
Sept. 7	at Kansas State
Sept. 14	NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 21	at Akron
Oct. 5	TEXAS STATE
Oct. 15	at Western Kentucky
Oct. 22	at Arkansas State
Nov. 2	NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 7	TROY
Nov. 16	at Georgia State
Nov. 30	ULM
Dec. 7	at South Alabama

2012 RESULTS

W	LAMAR	40-0
W	at Troy	37-24
L	at Oklahoma State	24-65
W	FIU	48-20
W	TULANE	41-13
L	at North Texas	23-30
L	ARKANSAS STATE	27-50
W	at ULM	40-24
L	at Florida	20-27
W	WESTERN KENTUCKY	31-27
W	SOUTH ALABAMA	52-30
W	at FAU	35-21
	New Orleans Bowl	
W	vs. East Carolina	43-34

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	35.5	24
Rushing	193.5	34
Passing	261.9	42
Total	455.3	29
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.1	63
Rushing	144.6	42
Passing	283.5	112
Total	428.1	86
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-1	-0.08	63

LOUISIANA-MONROE | WARHAWKS

Sun Belt rank: 1 **Record: 8-5** **Sun Belt record: 6-2 (T-2nd)** **Stadium: Malone Stadium (30,427)**

By Paul Borden

Kolton Browning

Photo by Jim Cowsert-USA TODAY Sports

"Even our two-deep, and sometimes our three-deep, has significant experience, so I feel a lot more comfortable."
— Coach Todd Berry

WARHAWKS at a GLANCE

COACH: Todd Berry — At ULM: 17-20, 3 years and overall: 46-80, 11 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Farmer
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Troy Reffett

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2005
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2011
RETURNING STARTERS: 17; 8 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Kolton Browning, RB Jyruss Edwards, WR Tavarese Maye, WR Je'Ron Hamm, NT Kentarius Caldwell, LB Ray Stovall, LB Cameron Blakes, S Mitch Lane

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: There are tons of experience on both sides of the ball, and the offense has the potential to be explosive, especially if the running game is consistent. Browning gives them a veteran leader who can do it all at the quarterback position.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The secondary was a major weakness last year, and the key question is whether a year's experience alone can result in enough improvement to make up for those shortcomings. Staying healthy is a major priority. Injuries nearly curtailed last year's bowl run.

OFFENSE

With quarterback Kolton Browning ready to begin his fourth year as a starter, the offense is in very good hands. Browning was the Sun Belt leader in total offense in 2012, rushing for nearly 500 yards and throwing for more than 3,000 despite missing one game because of injury.

He'll have four starters back up front to protect him, including center Josh Allen, a 2012 second-team All-Sun Belt performer.

Browning also will have four of his top five receivers back, led by Je'Ron Hamm (62 receptions, 915 yards) and Tavarese Maye (56-612). Both have big-play capability.

But there are issues.

The Warhawks lose top pass catcher Brent Leonard (104 catches for 1,118 yards), who provided Browning with a reliable safety valve, and the ground game was spotty at times, especially after running back Jyruss Edwards went out with an undisclosed injury after eight games.

Edwards is back, but a key backup, Centarius Donald, may not be available until midseason, if then.

If the Warhawks can stay healthy this time around, they could have the most productive offense in the conference.

DEFENSE

ULM went into 2012 hoping that its speed in the secondary would make up for any flaws or lack of experience in the unit. But it didn't work out that way.

Only one team in the conference gave up more yards through the air than the Warhawks, who surrendered over 276 a game despite leading the league in interceptions with 16 and finishing second in sacks with 24.

Maybe a year's experience will help. All five starters in coordinator Trey Reffett's 3-3-5 scheme return in the secondary, including corner Isaiah Newsome, who led the team with four picks.

Overall, seven regular starters are back from last year with several others who have started games. Add veteran linebacker Cameron Blakes, a 2011 starter who played only three games in 2012 before going out with a season-ending injury, and the Warhawks have plenty of experience to draw from moving forward.

Two losses are at linebacker where the Warhawks are looking to replace leading tackler R.J. Young and DaCorris Ford, who had 10.5 tackles for loss.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Justin Manton took on all kicking responsibilities last year when Aaron Munoz left the program to seek more playing time at another position. Manton was called on only nine times for field goals and made just five with three of them blocked. He averaged just under 40 yards on 48 punts but had none blocked.

OVERVIEW

Todd Berry got the Warhawks to the first bowl game in their history last year, and though they came up flat, losing 45-14 to Ohio in the Independence Bowl, the program is definitely on the upswing. If they can stay healthy on both sides of the ball, they figure to go into the fall as the preseason Sun Belt favorite and make a return trip to the postseason.

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Lenzy Pipkins: With the number of veterans ULM has returning, there will be few opportunities for newcomers to have an impact right away. But Pipkins, a redshirt freshman, had a good spring and could be a help in the secondary, which struggled at times in 2012.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	15	**Kolton Browning***	6-1	203	Sr.
RB	7	**Jyruss Edwards***	5-11	198	Sr.
WR	86	**Je'Ron Hamm***	6-4	233	Sr.
WR	13	Colby Harper	6-0	177	Jr.
WR	8	**Tavarese Maye***	6-0	181	Sr.
TE	88	Harley Scioneaux	6-5	247	So.
LT	65	**Joseph Treadwell***	6-5	316	Jr.
LG	78	**Jon Fisher***	6-3	306	Sr.
C	66	**Josh Allen***	6-3	315	Sr.
RG	77	Ben Risenhoover	6-2	293	Jr.
RT	75	**Demiere Burkett***	6-2	307	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	95	Darius Lively	6-3	249	Jr.
NT	91	Kentarius Caldwell	6-2	273	Sr.
DE	99	**Joey Gautney***	6-1	255	Jr.
LB	90	**Ray Stovall***	6-2	232	Jr.
LB	3	Cameron Blakes	6-1	233	Sr.
LB	44	Austin Moss	6-2	230	Sr.
CB	4	**Rob'Donovan Lewis***	5-10	176	Jr.
CB	14	**Vincent Eddie***	5-8	153	Sr.
S	1	**Isaiah Newsome***	5-11	191	Sr.
S	10	**Cordero Smith***	5-11	189	Jr.
S	38	**Mitch Lane***	6-0	206	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	17	**Justin Manton***	6-2	190	Jr.
P	17	**Justin Manton***	6-2	190	Jr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	at Oklahoma
Sept. 7	GRAMBLING STATE
Sept. 14	at Wake Forest
Sept. 21	at Baylor
Sept. 28	TULANE
Oct. 3	WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 12	at Texas State
Oct. 26	GEORGIA STATE
Oct. 31	at Troy
Nov. 9	ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 23	at South Alabama
Nov. 30	at Louisiana

2012 RESULTS

W	at Arkansas (OT)	34-31
L	at Auburn (OT)	28-31
L	BAYLOR	42-47
W	at Tulane	63-10
W	at Middle Tennessee	31-17
W	FAU	35-14
W	at Western Kentucky (OT)	43-42
W	SOUTH ALABAMA	38-24
L	LOUISIANA	24-40
L	at Arkansas State	23-45
W	NORTH TEXAS	42-16
W	at FIU (OT)	23-17
	Independence Bowl	
L	vs. Ohio	14-45

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	33.9	32
Rushing	142.1	85
Passing	290.7	27
Total	432.8	42

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.2	72
Rushing	142.2	39
Passing	276.6	108
Total	418.8	78

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
+7	+0.54	33

MIDDLE TENNESSEE | BLUE RAIDERS

C-USA rank: 4 Record: 8-4 Sun Belt record: 6-2 (T-2nd) Stadium: Floyd Stadium (30,788)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Robert Mayer-USA TODAY Sports

"I'm supposed to be the guy to bring the pressure this year."
— DE Alexandro Antoine

BLUE RAIDERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Rick Stockstill — At Middle Tennessee and overall: 43-44, 7 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Buster Faulkner
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Tyrone Nix, Steve Ellis

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2006, co-champs
LAST BOWL: 2010, GoDaddy.com
RETURNING STARTERS: 16; 9 offense, 6 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Logan Kilgore, RB Jordan Parker, WR Kyle Griswould, LG Josh Walker, DT Jimmy Staten, LB Roderic Blunt, SS Kevin Byard

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Kilgore is a proven commodity at quarterback, and Parker led the Blue Raiders in rushing as a freshman. Depth looks to be an asset. In addition to the returning starters, 10 other players had at least one start in 2013, six of them on defense.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Raiders must get better play up front on defense. They gave up 440.9 yards a game last year with 188.3 of it to opposing rushers. Opponents also converted more than half of their third-down opportunities.

OFFENSE

The Blue Raiders should be able to put up impressive numbers with veteran quarterback Logan Kilgore running the show.

Kilgore is in the top five of nearly every career passing category in the school record book; he completed 63 percent of his attempts last year with 16 touchdown passes and only six interceptions.

His favorite receiver, Anthony Amos, is gone, but he does have two returning starters at wideout in senior Kyle Griswould (45 catches, 531 yards) and sophomore Christian Collis (18-206).

Senior Tavarres Jefferson and redshirt freshman Terry Pettis will compete for a third starting spot. Jefferson, who led the Blue Raiders in receptions in 2011 with 51, is returning from a hamstring injury that limited him to one brief appearance in 2012.

Junior college transfers Chris Perkins and Devin Clarke make wideout a deep position.

Jordan Parker, who took over at running back for injured veteran Benny Cunningham halfway through last season, returns after setting a school freshman rushing record with 851 yards.

Four returning starters solidify the line. Darius Johnson started all 12 games at left tackle as a redshirt freshman last year, and senior left guard Josh Walker has 21 starts over the last two years.

DEFENSE

The Blue Raiders have rebuilding to do, losing four starters from their front seven and half the secondary.

Tackle Jimmy Staten and end Shubert Bastien are returning starters up front, but Bastien, who started all 12 games in 2012, came out of the spring No. 2 on the depth chart behind sophomore Alexandro Antoine. Staten has started 24 games over the past two years.

Junior Patrick McNeil, who had four starts at tackle last year, looks to take over one of the interior spots. Jiajuan Fennell, who had a bit of a sophomore slump after earning a spot on the Sun Belt All-Freshman Team in 2011, appears to have won the start at the other end.

Sophomore T.T. Barber, who had six starts but missed three games because of a shoulder injury in 2012, is the leader at middle linebacker.

Veteran linebacker Craig Allen, last year's leading tackler, looks to be done with football because of a neck injury he sustained late last year.

Safety Kevin Byard, who had four interceptions as a redshirt freshman a year ago, and senior corner Kenneth Gilstrap are returning starters in the secondary.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Josh Davis returns as the primary punter after averaging more than 40 yards on 42 attempts last year. The job of handling field goals and PATs will come down to a competition between redshirt freshman Cody Clark and incoming freshman Canon Rooker.

OVERVIEW

The Blue Raiders bounced back from a disastrous 2-10 season in 2011 to win eight games in 2012. If they find the right answers on defense and firm up the secondary, they should be competitive in a watered-down C-USA.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Terry Pettis: Coaches considered playing Pettis as a true freshman last fall, but held off. Even with the depth at the position, Pettis figures to get a good share of playing time. At 6-5, 220, he is a big wide receiver who will provide Logan Kilgore with a nice target in the red zone.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**10**	**Logan Kilgore***	**6-3**	**194**	**Sr.**
RB	**26**	**Jordan Parker***	**6-1**	**207**	**So.**
WR	**81**	**Christian Collis***	**6-0**	**210**	**So.**
WR	**9**	**Kyle Griswould***	**5-10**	**200**	**Sr.**
WR	3	Tavarres Jefferson	5-9	207	Sr.
TE	**83**	**Jacob Corbaley***	**6-3**	**248**	**Sr.**
LT	**75**	**Darius Johnson***	**6-3**	**280**	**So.**
LG	**77**	**Josh Walker***	**6-5**	**319**	**Sr.**
C	60	Nick Nunez	6-4	273	Sr.
RG	**61**	**Jadareius Hamlin***	**6-2**	**291**	**Sr.**
RT	**73**	**Isaiah Anderson***	**6-4**	**274**	**Jr.**
DEFENSE					
LE	97	Jiajuan Fennell	6-3	240	Jr.
LT	92	Patrick McNeil	6-1	301	Jr.
RT	**90**	**Jimmy Staten***	**6-4**	**300**	**Sr.**
RE	17	Alexandro Antoine	6-1	243	So.
LB	22	David Jones	5-11	197	Sr.
LB	**33**	**Roderic Blunt***	**6-0**	**228**	**Sr.**
LB	**38**	**T.T. Barber***	**6-1**	**215**	**So.**
CB	**18**	**Kenneth Gilstrap***	**5-9**	**181**	**Sr.**
CB	8	Sammy Seamster	6-1	201	Sr.
SS	**20**	**Kevin Byard***	**5-11**	**220**	**So.**
FS	31	Reginald Farmer	5-10	188	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	89	Cody Clark	6-1	173	Fr.
P	**48**	**Josh Davis***	**5-10**	**215**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 29	WESTERN CAROLINA
Sept. 7	at North Carolina
Sept. 14	MEMPHIS
Sept. 21	at FAU
Sept. 27	at BYU
Oct. 5	EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 12	at North Texas
Oct. 24	MARSHALL
Nov. 2	at UAB
Nov. 9	FIU
Nov. 23	at Southern Miss
Nov. 30	UTEP

2012 RESULTS

L	McNEESE STATE	21-27
W	FAU	31-17
W	at Memphis	48-30
W	at Georgia Tech	49-28
L	ULM	17-31
W	at FIU	34-30
L	at Mississippi State	3-45
W	NORTH TEXAS	38-21
W	at Western Kentucky	34-29
W	at South Alabama	20-12
W	TROY	24-21
L	at Arkansas State	0-45

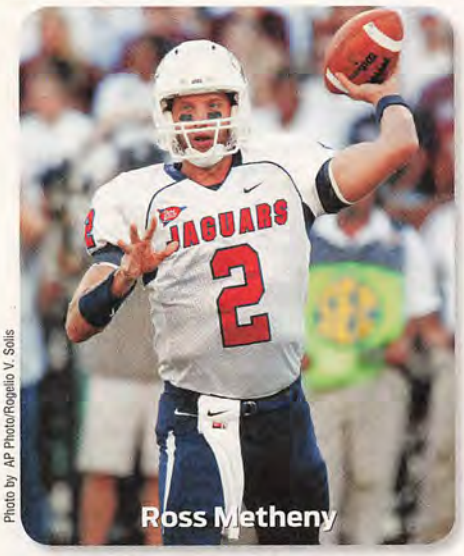
2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.6	75
Rushing	176.7	46
Passing	216.1	77
Total	392.8	66
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.0	62
Rushing	188.3	84
Passing	252.6	90
Total	440.9	92
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 10	+ 0.83	19

SOUTH ALABAMA | JAGUARS

Sun Belt rank: 7 | Record: 2-11 | Sun Belt: 1-7 (10th) | Stadium: Ladd-Peebles Stadium (40,000)

By Tommy Hicks



Ross Metheny

Photo by AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis

"I think the guys are starting to grasp everything. You can see the evolution of their learning, especially on defense."

— Coach Joey Jones

JAGUARS at a GLANCE

COACH: Joey Jones: At South Alabama: 25-14, 4 years; overall: 28-22, 5 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Robert Matthews
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kevin Sherrer

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: None
LAST BOWL: None
RETURNING STARTERS: 15; 7 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Brandon Bridge, RB Cristobal Dinham, TE Wes Saxton, OL Chris May, DE Alex Page, LB Enrique Williams, LB Clifton Crews

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The experience of last season will prove valuable to this year's team, which has several fifth-year seniors and, as coach Joey Jones described it in the spring, more leadership than any other team thus far. A year's experience in the spread offense and improvements made there will make the Jags a more dangerous team.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: While there are plenty of seniors and juniors on the roster, there is minimal experience against established Division I programs. And the Jags have never played in the kind of atmosphere they will face in Knoxville this season. The disappointment of last year's season could linger if South Alabama can't pick up a couple of early wins.

OFFENSE

Coordinator Robert Matthews put in a spread offense last season, and the Jaguars had flashes of success, but not a consistent attack. Spring drills brought more confidence and understanding, as well as a quicker pace.

Quarterback Ross Metheny is being pushed for the starting job by Alcorn State transfer Brandon Bridge, who brings a big arm and explosiveness as a runner. Junior college transfer Jay Jones proved himself at running back in the spring, but newcomers Cristobal Dinham and Kaleb Blanchard could figure into the mix. Demetre Baker and Kendall Houston also return.

The Jags have depth at receiver, led by Jereme' Jones, Bryant Lavender, Corey Besteda and Jake Howton.

The line will have two-deep depth for the first time in the program's history. Juniors and redshirt freshmen make up the majority of the unit. Wes Saxton at tight end will play a bigger role as a receiver and blocker.

A concentration on an improved running attack ruled the spring, but the passing game also took steps forward.

DEFENSE

The strength of the defense this season under new coordinator Kevin Sherrer should be the line.

The group will run out of a base 4-3 set, but a 4-2-5 alignment will be used often. Seniors dominate the defensive unit, so it is a group with experience, but its tendency to give up big plays was a problem last season, and the Jags need more pressure on the quarterback.

Linebacker Jake Johnson, South Alabama's leading tackler the past two seasons (and the Sun Belt's top tackler last season) has graduated, but there remains three seniors who will lead the linebacker corps — Enrique Williams (last year's No. 2 in total tackles), Bryson James and Clifton Crews.

The secondary remains an area of concern, although there is more depth. At cornerback, Tyrell Pearson and Darrius Morrow hold the spots coming out of spring, but look for junior college signee Montell Garner and Anthony Harris to compete for those spots in the fall.

At the safety spots, Charles Harris and Charles Watson are the early leaders, but incoming JC transfer Steffon Fuller figures to get a strong look and Terrell Brigham will get playing time. Qudarius Ford will play in the nickel package.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The loss of place-kicker Michel Chapuseaux may be tough to overcome. Aleem Sunanon was the leader out of spring, but incoming freshman Brandon McKee will get a chance to win the job. He may also get a look at punter, where Scott Garber returns.

OVERVIEW

This is the Jags' first season as a full FBS member after a two-year transition period. The offense must be able to score more points and move the football with consistency, while the defense has to cut down on the number of big plays it allows. Coach Joey Jones has done a solid job with the program and this season could represent small steps forward.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Cristobal Dinham: The JC transfer, who arrives for fall camp, is expected to make an immediate impact. He has the ability to run inside and can cause trouble if he can get on the outside. In USA's spread offense, which gets backs into open space, Dinham could have a big season.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**2**	**Ross Metheny***	**6-3**	**205**	**Sr.**
RB	3	Jay Jones	5-9	180	Jr.
WR	**8**	**Bryant Lavender***	**6-0**	**185**	**Sr.**
WR	9	Corey Besteda	6-3	190	Sr.
WR	**11**	**Jereme' Jones***	**5-8**	**160**	**Jr.**
TE	13	Wes Saxton	6-4	235	Jr.
LT	**55**	**Chris May***	**6-4**	**285**	**So.**
LG	72	Drew Dearman	6-3	320	Jr.
C	56	Matt Calcagnini	6-0	280	Sr.
RG	**73**	**Shaun Artz***	**6-4**	**290**	**Jr.**
RT	**77**	**Melvin Meggs***	**6-3**	**310**	**Jr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	**82**	**Alex Page***	**6-1**	**245**	**Sr.**
DL	**90**	**Romelle Jones***	**6-2**	**275**	**Sr.**
DL	93	Randon Carnathan	6-1	295	Sr.
DE	**8**	**Pat Moore***	**6-3**	**240**	**Sr.**
LB	**28**	**Enrique Williams***	**6-0**	**235**	**Sr.**
LB	38	Bryson James	6-2	230	Sr.
LB	**25**	**Clifton Crews***	**6-3**	**220**	**Sr.**
CB	9	Tyrell Pearson	5-8	150	Sr.
CB	**4**	**Darrius Morrow***	**5-10**	**170**	**Sr.**
NB	22	Qudarius Ford	5-7	170	Jr.
SS	3	Charles Watson	6-1	200	Sr.
FS	21	Charles Harris	6-1	190	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	97	Aleem Sunanon	5-7	185	Fr.
P	**40**	**Scott Garber***	**5-9**	**195**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 29	SOUTHERN UTAH
Sept. 7	at Tulane
Sept. 14	WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 28	at Tennessee
Oct. 5	at Troy
Oct. 19	KENT STATE
Oct. 26	at Texas State
Nov. 2	ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 16	at Navy
Nov. 23	ULM
Nov. 30	at Georgia State
Dec. 7	LOUISIANA

2012 RESULTS

L	UTSA	31-33
W	Nicholls State	9-3
L	at NC State	7-31
L	at Mississippi State	10-30
L	Troy	10-31
L	at Arkansas State	29-36
W	FAU (2OT)	37-34
L	at ULM	24-38
L	FIU	20-28
L	at North Texas	14-24
L	Middle Tennessee	12-20
L	at Louisiana	30-52
L	at Hawaii	7-23

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	18.5	N/A
Rushing	123.5	N/A
Passing	209.8	N/A
Total	333.4	N/A
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	29.5	N/A
Rushing	164.5	N/A
Passing	218.5	N/A
Total	382.9	N/A
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-12	-0.92	N/A

TROY | TROJANS

Sun Belt rank: 5 Record: 5-7 Sun Belt record: 3-5 (T-6th) Stadium: Veterans Memorial Stadium (30,000)

By Matt Lowe

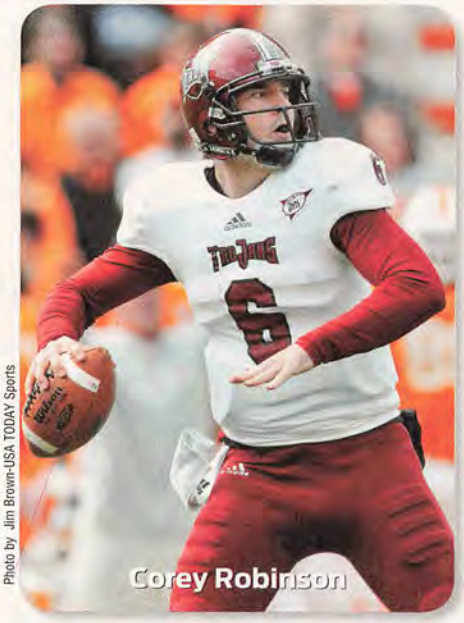


Photo by Jim Brown-USA TODAY Sports

"Being leaders on the team. Doing all the little things to win. That's what we need from them."
— Larry Blakeney on his senior QBs

TROJANS at a GLANCE

COACH: Larry Blakeney — At Troy and overall: 168-99-1, 23 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kenny Edenfield
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Wayne Bolt

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST BOWL: 2010, New Orleans
RETURNING STARTERS: 8; 3 offense, 3 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Corey Robinson, QB Deon Anthony, WR Eric Thomas, WR Chandler Worthy, OT Terrence Jones, DE Tyler Roberts, DB Camren Hudson, DB Chris Pickett, K Will Scott

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Troy possesses the top QB tandem in the conference and a talented WR corps, so the offense should pile up the points. Jones is a stalwart at tackle. Roberts and Marty Stadom are disruptive defensive ends. Pickett and Camren Hudson provide physicality and range at the safety spots.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The running back position remains unsettled and the offensive line returns just one starter. Size may be an issue at tailback. Depth at linebacker is a concern. Although veterans Chris and Ethan Davis return at cornerback, there isn't a whole lot of experience behind the two.

OFFENSE

All-Sun Belt performers Corey Robinson and Deon Anthony give the Trojans a dynamic one-two punch at quarterback.

Robinson paced an offense that averaged 30.6 points per game last year by completing 66.1 percent of his passes for 3,121 yards and 12 touchdowns. The cat-quick Anthony ranked second on the team in rushing yards (390) in addition to throwing for 856 yards and nine TDs. His versatility is extremely valuable.

Daron White, Brandon Burks and Khary Franklin will all play a role in replacing the production of Shawn Southward, Justin Albert and D.J. Taylor at tailback, but the position is far from settled. Signees Jordan Chunn and Joshua Anderson will also get a look.

Wideout Eric Thomas is one of the top returning players in the Sun Belt. He is the conference's active leader with 17 career touchdown catches and he headlines a deep and talented group of receivers. Thomas had 55 catches and a team-leading seven receiving touchdowns last season. Chandler Worthy is a speedy slot receiver who has a good grasp of the system.

Tackle Terrence Jones should be the one constant on a line that lost three quality players to graduation. Evan McKissack performed well in the spring and is on track to nail down the starting center job. Chris Hawkins and Jimmie Arnold will also be factors up front.

DEFENSE

Stopping the run and getting to the quarterback were two of Troy's biggest deficiencies on defense last year, so improvement is needed in both areas.

Shermane TeArt, Xavier Melton, Aaron Williams and Lonnie Gosha, a former Arkansas transfer, give the Trojans four quality players at defensive tackle. Tyler Roberts, a good pass rusher, and Marty Stadom will anchor the end positions. Coach Larry Blakeney really likes Roberts and Stadom and thinks Gosha has a lot of upside.

Dimitri Miles, Mark Wilson and Wayland Coleman-Dancer will get the bulk of the playing time at linebacker. Martrez Townes, Jeremy Spikner, Shaq Beverly and Eli Canton provide depth.

The secondary features two physical players in safeties Chris Pickett and Camren Hudson. The two combined for 111 tackles and five forced fumbles a year ago. Montres Kitchens and JaQuadrian Lewis will supply quality depth.

Cornerback is a concern. Ethan Davis is considered the team's best cover man. Chris Davis, Josh Burnham, Jacquez Young and Keion Payne will compete for the other starting spot.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Will Scott was a one-man show after handling the kicking and punting duties a year ago, but Ryan Kay will push the senior for the No. 1 punter job. Chandler Worthy is the team's top kick returner. Bryan Holmes impressed during the spring as a punt returner.

OVERVIEW

Troy's offense should be potent once again, but the defense — in particular the run defense — will have to improve if the Trojans want to compete for the Sun Belt crown.

TOP NEWCOMER

Daron White: White is a shifty back who has great speed and soft hands. He needs to work on picking up the blitz, but his skill-set should fit right in with the Trojans' high-powered offense.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**6**	**Corey Robinson***	**6-2**	**209**	**Sr.**
RB	28	Daron White	5-9	176	So.
WR	**3**	**Eric Thomas***	**6-1**	**209**	**Sr.**
WR	17	B.J. Chitty	6-2	197	Jr.
WR	89	Chris Williams	5-11	183	Sr.
WR	16	Chandler Worthy	5-9	159	Jr.
LT	**75**	**Terrence Jones***	**6-3**	**306**	**Jr.**
LG	67	Jimmie Arnold	6-1	276	Sr.
C	50	Evan McKissack	5-10	255	Sr.
RG	69	Dalton Bennett	6-3	293	So.
RT	78	Chris Hawkins	6-3	294	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	**33**	**Tyler Roberts***	**6-1**	**215**	**So.**
DT	**91**	**Shermane TeArt***	**6-1**	**279**	**Sr.**
DT	92	Xavier Melton	6-3	310	Sr.
DE	54	Marty Stadom	6-1	237	Sr.
LB	23	Wayland Coleman-Dancer	6-0	203	Sr.
LB	35	Mark Wilson	6-0	234	Jr.
NB	9	Dimitri Miles	6-1	209	Jr.
CB	25	Chris Davis	5-8	161	So.
CB	34	Ethan Davis	5-10	177	Jr.
S	1	Camren Hudson	5-10	195	Sr.
S	**7**	**Chris Pickett***	**5-11**	**200**	**Sr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**21**	**Will Scott***	**5-11**	**192**	**Sr.**
P	**21**	**Will Scott***	**5-11**	**192**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	UAB
Sept. 7	SAVANNAH STATE
Sept. 12	at Arkansas State
Sept. 21	at Mississippi State
Sept. 28	at Duke
Oct. 5	SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 12	at Georgia State
Oct. 26	at Western Kentucky
Oct. 31	ULM
Nov. 7	at Louisiana
Nov. 16	at Ole Miss
Nov. 29	TEXAS STATE

2012 RESULTS

W	at UAB	39-29
L	LOUISIANA	24-37
L	MISSISSIPPI STATE	24-30
W	at North Texas	14-7
W	at South Alabama	31-10
L	WESTERN KENTUCKY	26-31
W	FIU	38-37
L	at FAU	27-34
L	at Tennessee	48-55
W	NAVY	41-31
L	ARKANSAS STATE	34-41
L	at Middle Tennessee	21-24

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.6	52
Rushing	167.3	56
Passing	331.5	8
Total	498.8	11
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	30.5	82
Rushing	185.2	82
Passing	258.4	94
Total	443.6	96
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-7	-0.58	96

WESTERN KENTUCKY | HILLTOPPERS

Sun Belt rank: 4 Record: 7-6 Sun Belt: 4-4 (5th) Stadium: Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium (22,113)

By Chad Bishop

Photo by AP Photo

Antonio Andrews

"The key to our success in the past has been that the players have bought into attention to detail, technique and fundamentals."
— Coach Bobby Petrino

HILLTOPPERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Bobby Petrino — At Western Kentucky: 1st year and overall: 75-26, 7 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeff Brohm
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Nick Holt

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2002, Gateway Football Conference co-champs
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2011
RETURNING STARTERS: 14; 5 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Antonio Andrews, TE Mitchell Henry, LB Andrew Jackson, LB Xavius Boyd, CB Cam Thomas, S Jonathan Dowling

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The defense has an impressive back end full of playmakers, speed and hard hitters. If the Hilltoppers can patch together a defensive line and hold their own against the run, the defense will be able to carry them on days the offense struggles.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Having limited options at the quarterback position is a major concern. Petrino had three quarterbacks in spring camp and one signed for the fall. Only James Mauro has played significant time, and all three struggled in spring to grasp the change in offensive styles.

OFFENSE

The Hilltoppers will get a complete makeover on offense, switching from Willie Taggart's West Coast, power-run system to Bobby Petrino's pro-style, multiple attack. They also need to find a quarterback to run the new scheme.

Junior Brandon Doughty and redshirt sophomores James Mauro and DaMarcus Smith will compete to take the spot vacated by graduated quarterback Kawaun Jakes. They'll have three returning offensive linemen to work behind and one of the most versatile backs in America in senior Antonio Andrews.

Andrews had 3,161 all-purpose yards in 13 games in 2012, rushing for 1,728. He scored 15 touchdowns and had 726 return yards on kickoffs. His all-purpose total was the second most in NCAA history behind Barry Sanders' 1988 record.

The running backs this season will have more responsibility in the passing game, as blockers against the rush and in catching quick throws.

Tight end Jack Doyle graduated, but Mitchell Henry and Tyler Higbee should be more-than-adequate options to take Doyle's spot.

There are 15 wide receivers on the roster, but only five caught passes in 2012. The most notable is junior Willie McNeal, who hauled in 43 balls for 556 yards and a team-leading six scores.

DEFENSE

A major concern for WKU is the play of its defensive line. Under new defensive coordinator Nick Holt, the Tops will look to replace four seniors — Quanterus Smith, Rammell Lewis, Jamarcus Allen and Cole Tischer — up front.

Still, the Western Kentucky defense ranked first in the Sun Belt Conference in 2012 in rushing defense, pass efficiency defense, total defense, sacks and tackles for loss, and it was second in scoring and pass defense.

The strength lies behind the line of scrimmage where senior linebackers Andrew Jackson (122 tackles) and Xavius Boyd (79 tackles) reside.

Behind them, WKU may employ five defensive backs with corners Cam Thomas, Arius Wright and Tyree Robinson. Safeties Kiante Young and Jonathan Dowling (six interceptions) anchor the back end.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior punter Hendrix Brakefield has been a staple for WKU for two seasons and should continue to be so in 2013. He averaged 42.1 yards on 45 punts last season.

Garrett Schwettman emerged as the team's go-to kicker as a freshman in 2012. The walk-on made 10 of 13 field goal attempts and 42 of 43 extra-point tries in his first season.

OVERVIEW

Bobby Petrino grabbed national headlines by returning to the sidelines after scandal got him fired in the spring of 2012 at Arkansas. This is no reclamation project for the 52-year-old, who inherits a team coming off consecutive seven-win seasons and the program's first ever FBS bowl trip. If Petrino succeeds right away and rehabilitates his reputation, it will be interesting to see if he hangs around long enough to move with the program to Conference USA in 2014.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Damarcus Smith: A four-star prospect out of high school in 2010, Smith committed to Louisville, signed with Central Florida, then transferred to WKU and sat out in 2012. The redshirt sophomore is the team's lone dual-threat option at quarterback and could see significant playing time.

2013 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	12	Brandon Doughty	6-3	210	Jr.
RB	**5**	**Antonio Andrews***	**6-0**	**211**	**Sr.**
FB	32	Kadeem Jones	5-11	246	Sr.
WR	**10**	**Willie McNeal***	**5-10**	**180**	**Jr.**
WR	4	Rico Brown	5-11	185	Jr.
TE	80	Mitchell Henry	6-4	245	Jr.
LT	**52**	**Cameron Clemmons***	**6-6**	**305**	**Jr.**
LG	**65**	**Sean Conway***	**6-3**	**305**	**Sr.**
C	**63**	**Luis Polanco***	**6-2**	**292**	**Sr.**
RG	68	Cliff Burns	6-8	332	Sr.
RT	60	Ed Hazelett	6-8	324	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	40	Bar'ee Boyd	6-1	233	Sr.
DT	91	Calvin Washington	6-5	277	Sr.
DT	94	Bryan Shorter	6-2	285	So.
DE	16	T.J. Smith	6-2	239	Jr.
LB	**4**	**Andrew Jackson***	**6-1**	**265**	**Sr.**
LB	**13**	**Xavius Boyd***	**6-2**	**243**	**Sr.**
CB	**19**	**Cam Thomas***	**6-1**	**190**	**Jr.**
CB	**21**	**Arius Wright***	**5-11**	**200**	**Sr.**
CB	**22**	**Tyree Robinson***	**5-10**	**200**	**Sr.**
SS	**1**	**Jonathan Dowling***	**6-3**	**198**	**Jr.**
FS	**29**	**Kiante Young***	**5-11**	**220**	**Sr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**56**	**Garrett Schwettman***	**5-11**	**160**	**So.**
P	**99**	**Hendrix Brakefield***	**6-4**	**235**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2013 SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	vs. Kentucky (Nashville)
Sept. 7	at Tennessee
Sept. 14	at South Alabama
Sept. 21	MORGAN STATE
Sept. 28	NAVY
Oct. 3	at ULM
Oct. 16	LOUISIANA
Oct. 26	TROY
Nov. 2	at Georgia State
Nov. 9	at Army
Nov. 23	at Texas State
Nov. 30	ARKANSAS STATE

2012 RESULTS

W	AUSTIN PEAY	49-10
L	at Alabama	0-35
W	at Kentucky (OT)	32-31
W	SOUTHERN MISS	42-17
W	at Arkansas State	26-13
W	at Troy	31-26
L	ULM (OT)	42-43
W	at FIU	14-6
L	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	29-34
L	FAU	28-37
L	at Louisiana	27-31
W	NORTH TEXAS	25-24
	Little Caesars Pizza Bowl	
L	vs. Central Michigan	21-24

2012 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.2	68
Rushing	181.7	45
Passing	205.2	90
Total	386.9	74
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	25.5	50
Rushing	138.4	34
Pass	209.8	34
Total	348.2	26
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-1	-.08	63

A LOOK BACK

5 YEARS AGO: 2008

This was the season of Tim Tebow's promise. The Florida Gators won the national championship for the second time in three years, as Tebow led the way after a shocking 31-30 loss to Ole Miss on Sept. 27. Tebow promised that no team would play as hard as the Gators the rest of the season, and indeed, Urban Meyer's ballclub swept the remaining 10 games. Two weeks later, the Gators handled defending national champion and fourth-ranked LSU by 30; they rallied past top-ranked Alabama in the SEC title tilt; and they handled Oklahoma in the BCS national championship game.

SEC champion: Florida (13-1, 7-1)
SEC Player of Year: Tim Tebow, QB, Florida
Heisman Trophy: Sam Bradford, QB, Oklahoma; 3rd-Tebow
Outland Trophy: Andre Smith, OT, Alabama
National champion: Florida beat Oklahoma in Miami, 24-14.

10 YEARS AGO: 2003

LSU spent a month working its way into the Top 10, but then a 19-7 loss at home to Florida seemed to put the Tigers in a tough spot. No matter. All Nick Saban's team did was win the rest of its games ... yes, including the SEC Championship Game (34-13 over Georgia) to get a spot in the Sugar Bowl for the BCS Championship. Once there, they took care of top-ranked Oklahoma to win the BCS share of the title, although USC (also with one loss) got the nod from the AP voters.

SEC champion: LSU (13-1, 7-1)
SEC Player of Year: Eli Manning, QB, Ole Miss
Heisman Trophy: Jason White, QB, Oklahoma; 3rd-Manning
National champion: LSU beat Oklahoma in Sugar Bowl, 21-14.

15 YEARS AGO: 1998

Ricky Williams, Texas
Photo by LSU/Collegiate Images/Getty Images

A year after Peyton Manning's college career ended, Tennessee was not considered a serious national title contender. But when QB Tee Martin and the Vols knocked off Florida in overtime (20-17), the frenzy at Neyland Stadium was just the start of something big. The Vols got a gift of a victory at Arkansas (the infamous Clint Stoerner stumble fumble) and they used a fourth-quarter rally to get past Mississippi State in the SEC title game ... and finally outlasted Florida State 23-16 in the Fiesta to win the fat rings.

SEC champion: Tennessee (13-0, 8-0)
SEC Player of Year: Tim Couch, QB, Kentucky
Heisman Trophy: Ricky Williams, TB, Texas; 4th-Couch; 7th-Champ Bailey, DB/WR, Georgia
National champion: Tennessee beat Florida State in Fiesta Bowl, 23-16.

20 YEARS AGO: 1993

Charlie Ward, Florida State
Photo by LSU/Collegiate Images/Getty Images

Terry Bowden's Auburn Tigers scored a dramatic 38-35 upset of Florida and went on to complete a remarkable 11-0 season. Alas, the program was on probation and had no place to go, and finished fourth in the final polls. Still, it was the first time Florida coach Steve Spurrier found himself on the losing side in The Swamp. Yet, these Gators had staying power. Without Auburn in the way, they went on to win the SEC title and then won the Sugar Bowl for the first time ever, hammering West Virginia, 41-7.

SEC champion: Florida (11-2, 7-1)
SEC Player of Year: Heath Shuler, QB, Tennessee
Heisman Trophy: Charlie Ward, QB, Florida State; 2nd-Shuler; 3rd-David Palmer, RB-KR, Alabama; 10th-Eric Zeier, QB, Georgia.
Jim Thorpe Award: Antonio Langham, CB, Alabama
National champion: Florida State (12-1) beat Nebraska in Orange Bowl, 18-16.

25 YEARS AGO: 1988

For the first time in 12 seasons, no SEC teams finished in the top five in the nation (Auburn was No. 8). It was a wild campaign, with everybody beating everybody else. Florida surprised LSU at the beginning of October, but the following week the Tigers shocked Auburn, 7-6, and then survived some other ridiculously close games the rest of the way.

SEC champion: Auburn (10-2, 6-1) and LSU (8-4, 6-1)
SEC Player of Year: Tracy Rocker, DT, Auburn
Heisman Trophy: Barry Sanders, TB, Oklahoma State; 10th-Derrick Thomas, LB, Alabama.
Outland Trophy: Tracy Rocker, DT, Auburn
Butkus Award: Derrick Thomas, LB, Alabama
National champion: Notre Dame (12-0) beat West Virginia in the Fiesta Bowl, 34-21 — the most recent title for the Irish.

50 YEARS AGO: 1963

Ole Miss won its third consecutive SEC championship, but this one was a little bit tarnished, considering that coach John Vaught settled for a tie against State with a late field goal from the 3-yard line in a 10-10 result. The tie favored the Rebels, who finished 7-0-2, and were invited to face Alabama in the Sugar Bowl. It was quite a year — this being a week after the JFK assassination canceled most games, and three months after James Meredith became the first African-American ever to graduate from Ole Miss. Still, the Rebels made it 16 years in a row without a loss to MSU (including three ties), but they dropped to No. 7 in the polls, and when they went on to fall to Alabama in the bowl game, it felt like they finished the season with a two-game losing streak.

SEC champion: Ole Miss (5-0-1, 7-1-2)
SEC Player of Year: Jimmy Sidle, QB, Auburn
Heisman Trophy: Roger Staubach, QB, Navy; 7th-Sidle
National champion: The final polls were taken at the end of the regular season, and Texas (11-0) was a unanimous choice after completing the only unbeaten, untied season among major college teams.

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